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A TREATISE

ON THE LORD'S SUPPER.

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A TREATISE ON

THE LORD'S SUPPER:

DESIGNED AS

A GUIDE AND COMPANION TO THE HOLY COMMUNION.

BY THE REV. E. BICKERSTETH,

RECTOR OF WATTON, HERTS.

ELEVENTH EDITION, ENLARGED.

PUBLISHED BY R. B. SEELEY AND W. BURNSIDE:
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PREFACE.

It seems to require some apology to publish another Treatise on the Lord's Supper, when several valuable ones have appeared already.

It might perhaps be sufficient to say, that many are disposed to look at a modern publication, who would not even read a more valuable one of former years. But what is the state of the Christian Church? Numbers who have attended public worship constantly and regularly, from year to year, ten, twenty, thirty, or more years, never have received the Lord's Supper!

Many thousands, not to say many millions, in Great Britain, who have been baptized, and who profess themselves to be Christians, have never obeyed a dying charge of their Redeemer! Yet it has been justly remarked, that in the accounts which we have of those most distinguished for piety, never any one excelled in the virtues of the Christian life, but was accustomed frequently to nourish his soul with "the banquet of this most heavenly food." Publications of this nature cannot, therefore, be

unseasonable, while so important an ordinance continues to be neglected by so large a proportion of Christians.

Without invidious remarks on any former works on this subject, it cannot but be obvious that some have a tendency to foster self-righteousness, or to make preparation not only so tedious and troublesome as to be impracticable for persons engaged in the ordinary concerns of life, but, as Bishop Beveridge expresses it, "so nice and ticklish a thing, that they despair of ever observing all the little rules which are laid down, and therefore seldom, or never, trouble their heads about it."

The author, while he has gladly availed himself of the help afforded by the Treatises of others, has endeavoured to take the scriptures as his only sure guide. He has had occasion to see, that the nature of this ordinance has been much mistaken from a neglect of that guide. In extracting passages from old authors, he has taken the liberty here and there of altering a word, or the construction of a sentence, to adapt it to more modern usage. Where he has varied the idea, he has generally noticed the passage as taken from others, by inverted commas, without quoting the authority; thus making himself responsible for the sentiment expressed.

The writer has seldom quoted the opinions of the Christian Fathers on the Sacrament, being convinced

that the holy scriptures are the only and the sufficient rule of faith to the church. He was anxious also not to swell his work; and not to make it controversial, instead of a practical and devotional book. Those who wish to see the sentiments of the Fathers GENERALLY, may consult the writings of Cranmer and Jewell. L'Arroque's History of the Sacrament gives a full account of their sentiments on its form of celebration, doctrine, and worship. Waterland's Treatise on the Eucharist, gives their sentiments on the DOCTRINES of the Sacrament; and Bingham's Christian Antiquities, on the DISCIPLINE of the Church respecting it. These writers sufficiently establish the point, that the doctrines and practices peculiar to the Roman Catholics have no support in the primitive fathers, whose statements in the main concur with those of the Protestant churches, and particularly of the Church of England. Cranmer's Treatise on the Sacrament is well worth reading by every one; but readers in general will find little interest or profit from controversial treatises.

It is generally known that this institution was one of the chief points in controversy with the Protestants and Roman Catholics, and, alas! among the Protestant churches themselves at the Reformation. The Author has almost wholly abstained from that controversy, being persuaded that the plain statement, and the scriptural proof of truth, is here

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ADVERTISEMENT TO THE ELEVENTH EDITION.

THE later editions have contained some enlargements which appeared likely to be useful, and four additional Meditations have been added to the present edition. Two abridgments have been published in different forms for wider circulation; one chiefly extracted from the first part, entitled "An Invitation to the Lord's Supper," price 6d., and the other chiefly extracted from the second part, entitled "A Companion to the Holy Communion," in 18mo. and in 32mo. To God be all the praise for any benefit any ma have received by this work. May He graciously continue to use it for the spiritual welfare of each reader; and prepare all our hearts for his coming kingdom, and heavenly glory!

EDWARD BICKERSTETH.

Watton Rectory,
August 6, 1841.

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A TREATISE

ON

THE LORD'S SUPPER.

PART I.

DESIGNED TO EXPLAIN THE NATURE OF THE HOLY COMMUNION.

ON THE LORD'S SUPPER.

INTRODUCTION.

ON THE NATURE OF THE SACRAMENT OF THE LORD'S SUPPER.

THE Church of England has briefly, and yet fully, thus described the nature of a Sacrament: 'It is an outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace given unto us, ordained by Christ himself, as a means whereby to receive the same, and a pledge to assure us thereof.' It is a divinely-instituted means of grace, whereby God invisibly, but effectually, communicates that grace to all true believers. Hooker, with the comprehensive wisdom which marks his Ecclesiastical Polity, thus sums up the varied properties of a sacrament:—

'Let respect be had to the duty which every Communicant undertakes, and we may well determine concerning THE USE of Sacraments, that they serve as

bonds of obedience to God, strict obligations to the mutual exercise of Christian charity, provocations to godliness, preservation from sin, and memorials of the principal benefits of Christ. Respect THE TIME of their Institution, and it thereby appears that God has annexed them for ever unto the New Testament, as other rites were before with the old. Regard the weakness which is in us, and they are WARRANTS for the more security of our belief. Compare the receivers of them with such as receive them not—and sacraments are MARKS OF DISTINCTION OF GOD'S own from strangers, so that in all these respects they are found to be most necessary. But their chiefest force and virtue consists not herein so much, as in that they are HEAVENLY CEREMONIES, which God has sanctified and ordained to be administered in his Church: first AS MARKS whereby to know when God does impart the vital or saving grace of Christ to all that are capable thereof, and secondly, AS MEANS conditional, which God requires in them unto whom he imparts grace. For since God in himself is invisible, and cannot by us be discerned working; therefore, when it seems good in the eyes of his heavenly wisdom, that men, for some special interest and purpose, should take notice of his glorious presence, he gives them some plain and sensible token whereby to know what they cannot see. (Exod. iii. 2. John v. 4. Acts ii. 3.) In like manner it is with us. Christ and his Holy Spirit, with all their blessed effects, though entering into the soul of man, (we are not able to comprehend or express how,) do notwithstanding give notice of the times when they use to make their access, because it pleases Almighty God to communicate by sensible means those blessings which are

incomprehensible. Seeing, therefore, that grace is a consequent of Sacraments, a thing which accompanies them as their end, a benefit which they have received from God himself, the Author of Sacraments, and not from any other natural or supernatural quality in them, it may be hereby both understood that the sacraments are necessary, and that the manner of their necessity to life supernatural is not in all respects as food unto natural life, because they contain in themselves no vital force or efficiency; they are not physical but moral instruments of salvation, duties of service and worship, which unless we perform as the Author of grace requires, they are unprofitable. For all receive not the grace of God, which receive the sacraments of his grace. Neither is it ordinarily his will to bestow the grace of sacraments, but by the sacraments, which grace also they that receive by sacraments, or with sacraments, receive it from him and not from them."

In these words of Hooker, is pointed the true nature and use of a sacrament. The grace we obtain by a right reception of the Lord's Supper is the participation of Christ, and of life through him. The apostle's words on this point are express:—"*The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? the bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ? For we being many are one bread and one body, for we are all partakers of that one bread.* The unworthy receiver forfeits the blessing, (1 Cor. xi. 27.) just as the unworthy conduct of many in Israel forfeited the blessing designed by that *spiritual* meat of which they all ate, and that *spiritual* drink of which they all drank. But it was not the less, spiritual meat and spiritual drink, con-

veying to true believers in types, Christ and his grace, and real participation of spiritual blessings.

By the expressions of the apostle respecting Israel we are taught that the union of the grace and the outward sign is a reality; and though unbelief renders it void, faith apprehends it, and receives the whole blessing. The necessity of faith in the receiver was one great principle in the Reformation. Luther testified at the end of the 7th Conclusion in his Resolutions, that it was necessary that all partaking of the sacrament should believe [See Lutheri Opera, vol. i. b. 71.] and in his letter to Frederick, [See Letters, Nov. 29, 1518,] he defends what he had there said, 'that it was needful that he who went to the Sacrament should believe that he should obtain the grace of the sacrament;' counting tha the should deny Christ, if he denied this opinion respecting faith.

It may be useful to make this yet more clear. Man consists of two parts, body and soul; but the soul being invisible and spiritual, it is very difficult for us to realize its necessities, as well as the infinite importance of supplying those necessities. By connecting the communication of grace with outward ordinances, the Lord condescends to our infirmities, and meets our weaknesses with visible signs and seals. We see the bread, we eat it, we drink the wine; we know that they nourish the body. We have only then to transfer to the soul the ideas connected with the strengthening and refreshing of the body. As the body requires its proper food, so the soul requires to be fed with divine truth, and that truth which is eminently suitable for the nourishment of the soul is the doctrine of our Lord Jesus Christ giving his life a ransom for our sins. The bread

which he gives for the soul is the glorious truth, that he gave *his flesh for the life of the world.* Nor can any thing else but this meet the wants of the soul and supply us with what shall really strengthen and delight and quicken the immortal spirit of man. All the glories of God shine in the heart, in the face of Jesus Christ, and in such a way as to fill us with joy and peace in believing. Here every desire is met. I see God most holy, and yet most full of love to me a sinner, and a way of access to him with the utmost confidence is open for me. I see here, gifts of pardon, peace, strength, salvation and eternal life assured to me. And the Lord not only gives the outward signs, to teach by visible pictures, but he gives to the believer receiving them in faith, the inward promised grace, which in infinite tenderness he has joined with those outward signs.

As we have both a body and a soul, so we want food for both. *Man doth not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God doth man live.* By thus connecting spiritual food with bodily food, the Lord has, in wisdom, kindness, and love, ordained a means of grace exactly adapted to our present situation, and calculated to lead our minds through earthly things, to spiritual and heavenly things, and so to ripen us for that blessed state, where we shall have a spiritual body, and be able to see him as he is, and rejoice in his presence for ever.

Both the mind and the affections, the understanding and the heart, are thus helped and blessed. The bread nourishes the body, and the whole obedience and work of Jesus furnish food for meditation to the understanding, to nourish and strengthen it. The

wine refreshes the body, and the glorious truths of the gospel, redemption through the blood of Jesus, and the inheritance obtained in him, rejoice the heart and gladden the soul. Both meat and drink are needful for the good of the body; and so the soul, in both its powers, the understanding and the heart, requires the varied parts of divine truth.

We have a beautiful picture of those blessings which our Lord Christ gives, in the conduct of Melchizedek to Abraham. *Melchizedek, king of Salem, brought forth bread and wine, and he was the priest of the Most High God, and he blessed him and said, Blessed be Abram of the Most High God, possessor of heaven and earth, and blessed be the Most High God, which hath delivered thine enemies into thine hand.* The delivering of bread and wine was not merely a memorial of victories over enemies, but a token of continued blessing, of full provision for every want, and final possession of the promised inheritance. Indeed, the sacraments seem to be a kind of first redemption of the most needful things, water, bread, and wine, for the highest end of their creation, their spiritual use; in token that ultimately every part of creation shall thus be sacramentally blessed, and made a means of grace, to lead us to constant and delightful communion with God.

But however this may be, let us thankfully and gratefully observe God's present and divinely instituted ordinances, as exalted means of grace for enjoying the indwelling of his Son, the gift of his Spirit, and all the spiritual blessings in Christ, wherewith he hath blessed us.

CHAPTER I.

THE APPOINTMENT OF THE LORD'S SUPPER.

THE circumstances in which the Lord's Supper was first appointed, are full of interest. Let us for a moment place ourselves at Jerusalem, at its first institution, amid the little company gathered round our Lord in the upper chamber. It was a solemn and impressive season. He had just foretold the speedy destruction of their beautiful city and magnificent temple; he had clearly intimated to them that a scene of sorrow was *at hand;* but when he saw the anxiety which this occasioned, he laboured to support and encourage them. The disciples were deeply affected by the peculiar tenderness both of his discourses and of his conduct. He told them, *With desire I have desired to eat this passover with you before I suffer; for I say unto you, I will not eat any more thereof, until it be fulfilled in the kingdom of God.* He then washed their feet; and afterwards, *troubled in spirit,* he *testified, One of you shall betray me.* Exceedingly sorrowful, each of them asked, *Lord is it I?*

A cloud of affliction evidently hung over their heads, and they knew not what was before them. With one exception they deeply loved their Master, and were determined to give up their all for his sake; but they were most of all troubled at the thoughts of losing the inestimable advantages of his presence, his converse, and his affectionate care and guidance.

In the midst of this lowly and despised company, observe the blessed Saviour. Affecting indeed must have been that paschal supper, which contained so lively a resemblance and picture of his own immediate sufferings. But, laying aside all consideration for himself, unmindful of his own sorrows, he spent his time in comforting his disciples. "His heart," says one, "was filled with love to his people; and that love, which carried him to all the darkness and difficulty through which he was to go, moved him to institute the ordinance of the Lord's Supper, for the benefit and advantage of his Church." By appointing it at this affecting moment, he made the memorial of his death the more impressive, and increased our obligations to obey the command, *This do in remembrance of me.*

In order to have distinct and clear views of that important fact of which this institution is the memorial, we must go yet farther back, and briefly retrace the history of God's dealings with man from the beginning.

Originally man was created pure and holy. Surrounded with every good, and enjoying the favour of God, he dwelt in Eden: but, by disregarding the appointed test of obedience, he fell from that happy state, and became guilty and sinful. As springing

from sinful parents, all are sinful, and under the sentence of death. *In Adam all die; by one man's disobedience many were made sinners.*

The extent of this corruption will be seen in the divine declaration, that *the imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth;* and in the confession of his most devoted servants, *Behold, I was shapen in wickedness, and in sin did my mother conceive me:—I know that in me, that is, in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing.*

But *God, who is rich in mercy, for the great love wherewith he loved us,* did not leave man without a hope. He promised a deliverer, the Lord Jesus Christ. The coming of this deliverer was delayed for four thousand years. By this means all the natural tendencies of the human heart were displayed, and man's inability to work out his own restoration to holiness and happiness was fully proved. Hence the necessity of the redemption by Jesus Christ was made manifest, men were prepared to expect some grand fulfilment of the splendid language of prophecy, and the faith of God's servants in his promises was exercised and proved. But though the coming of our Lord was so long delayed, such clear intimations of his person, character, and work, were given, that no sincere inquirer could mistake the Messiah when at length he appeared.

In order to fulfil his gracious design, it pleased God to set the people of Israel apart from other nations, and to enter into a covenant with them. With this national covenant was interwoven a variety of rites and ceremonies, typical of the promised Redeemer. Among these rites, SACRIFICES (which had been before appointed), held a distinguished place.

When animals were offered in sacrifice, they were, in pursuance of God's direction, slain before his altar, and offered up to him by the priest, as an atonement for the sins of the worshipper. Thus "he was reminded, on the one hand, for his humiliation, of the forfeiture of his own life, of the death which he deserved on account of sin; and on the other, for his consolation, of the promised substitution of another in his stead, to bear his sin, to atone for his guilt, and to screen him from its deserved punishment." A lamb was, according to the Mosaic law, slain every morning and every evening. It is with reference to this that our Lord is called *the Lamb, the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sins of the world.* These sacrifices of the Jewish Church were then figurative of his death for our sins.

The PASSOVER must also be here particularly noticed. It was one of the three principal feasts of the Jews, appointed in remembrance of their deliverance from Egypt. At this feast a lamb, without spot or blemish, was chosen, and after it had been kept for three days, was presented and slain before the altar, (Deut. xvi. 5.) No bone was to be broken, but it was roasted with fire, and eaten with unleavened bread.* The Jews were to show their children at

* Several learned men have supposed that the Lord's Supper was designed to be similar to the ancient Feast on Sacrifices. Their general statement on the subject is as follows.

The Jews at the peace-offering sacrifices, (Lev. vii. 15—20.) as well as at the passover, were accustomed to feast on the victim that had been offered as a sacrifice. 1 Sam. ix. 13. The heathen nations also retained the practice of eating a part of the victim which they sacrificed, (Exod. xxxiv. 15, Numb. xxv. 2, Psalm cvi. 28) in order to participate in the propitiation supposed to be effected by the sacrifice. The custom of a feast upon a sacrifice was very general, and the idea was, that all who partook of the feast manifested an approval of the

this feast the sacrifice of the Lord's Passover, and how God had delivered them from Egypt. Exod. xii. 26, 27; xiii. 8. It was thus to be a striking and constantly recurring type or figure, of that great sacrifice, in the death of our Lord Jesus Christ, for the sake of which God passes over the sins of his people. The way in which the Jews observed the passover will illustrate some particulars in the appointment of the Lord's Supper. After they had used great diligence in putting away all the leavened

worship, and partook of the benefit of the sacrifice. Hence the apostles forbade Christians to eat of meats offered to idols, (Acts xvi. 29.) and St. Paul shows the Corinthians how utterly inconsistent it was that they who went to the Lord's table should yet go to the table of idolaters; *Ye cannot drink of the cup of the Lord and the cup of devils; ye cannot be partakers of the Lord's table and of the table of devils.* Hence also St. John speaks strongly and repeatedly against those who eat of the sacrifices offered to idols. Rev. ii. 14, 20. Many think that in the institution of the Lord's Supper, our Lord therefore availed himself of this ancient and general practice, in order by analogy to impress more forcibly on the minds of his disciples the nature of his death as a sacrifice, the necessity of an interest in it, and the duty of professing before others our faith in his blood. For a further illustration of this view, the reader is referred to Cudworth, Waterland, Pelling, Warburton, Cleaver, Knox, A. Clarke, Card, and others who have written at large on this point.

But the writer, after considering what has been written on this subject, seriously hesitates in adopting this view, on these grounds: We do not eat of the victim itself. What we do is in remembrance of him who was the victim. The sacrifice for sin is the principal point commemorated, and the Jewish sacrifice for sin was not to be eaten. The notion does not necessarily flow either from the Apostle's statement in the Epistle to the Corinthians, or our Lord's words in the appointment. For these reasons the writer cannot but think that those who make the Lord's supper a feast on a sacrifice, go farther than the Scriptures bear them out. They have formed an ingenious analogy to the sentiments and rites of antiquity in many particulars; but they do not appear to him to have satisfactorily proved that it was our Lord's intention that this ordinance should be of a similar nature to the ancient feasts on a sacrifice. Nor is such a view by any means necessary in order to rescue this Institution from the statement, given by some, of its being a mere memorial, unattended with special benefits; as the subsequent part of this treatise will sufficiently show.

bread from their houses, at the time of eating the passover, they were accustomed to take a piece of the unleavened bread, and bless, break it, and distribute it to those assembled. They drank wine together out of several distinct vessels, with grateful acknowledgments of God's goodness to them, declaring at this time the things which he had done for Israel. The whole was concluded with a hymn of praise. It is obvious how similar several of the rites observed at the passover, were to those adopted in the Lord's Supper. And it was important to connect the Lord's Supper with the Passover, because it was intended to supersede that ordinance, and to be illustrated by it.

We will only notice further with respect to the Jewish dispensation, THE RATIFICATION of it. The covenant made at Mount Sinai was ratified by the sprinkling of blood. After the victim had been sacrificed unto the Lord, we read, *Moses took half of the blood, and put it in basins, and half of the blood he sprinkled on the altar. And he took the book of the covenant, and read in the audience of the people, and they said, All that the Lord hath said will we do, and be obedient. And Moses took the blood and sprinkled it on the people, and said, Behold the blood of the covenant, which the Lord hath made with you concerning all these words.* Exod. xxiv. Heb. ix. 19, 20. Such was the introduction of that large and grand system of typical atonements, which continued in force till he appeared, who *put away sin by the sacrifice of himself.* Heb. ix. 26.

Let us now view the appointment of the Lord's Supper. It was at the feast of the Passover, and as is generally supposed, immediately after partaking

of it, and probably in the way that has been described, that our Lord instituted this ordinance, to be a constant memorial of his atonement for sin, and of his ratification of a better covenant by his own death.

The true Paschal Lamb, even Jesus Christ, being about to be offered up as a sacrifice for our sins, the type and shadow, now that the antitype and substance were come, were no longer to be used. The slaying of the lamb was therefore to be relinquished, and instead of the paschal feast of remembrance, the feast of the Lord's supper was appointed. One was instituted the night before the deliverance from Egypt; the other the night before our deliverance from our iniquities. One commemorated redemption from Egyptian bondage; the other, a better redemption from the bondage of sin. One prefigured by shedding of blood, the redemption of Christ: the other would exhibit, by striking emblems, a redemption already accomplished. By this new ordinance our Lord told his disciples that the Jewish dispensation was passing away, and the Christian, clearer and fuller in its light, and richer in its blessings, was established in its place. As it was needful to partake of the passover as the means and pledge of their security from the destruction of the first-born, so it is needful for us to partake of the Lord's supper, as the means and pledge of our deliverance from the destruction coming on the ungodly.

With this information, the words recording the appointment of this ordinance will be more easily understood. We have an account of them in four different parts of the New Testament. Matt. xxvi. 26—30. Mark xiv. 22—26. Luke xxii. 18—20. 1 Cor.

xi. 23—25. As they in some measure vary, the whole are here given.

Matt. xxvi.	Mark xiv.	Luke xxii.	1 Cor. xi.
(26.) *And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and blessed it, and brake it, and gave to the disciples, and said, Take, eat; this is my body.*	(22.) *And as they did eat, Jesus took bread, and blessed, and brake it, and gave to them, and said, Take, eat; this is my body.*	(19.) *And he took bread, and gave thanks, and brake it, and gave unto them saying, This is my body which is given for you: this do in remembrance of me.*	(23.) *The Lord Jesus, the same night in which he was betrayed, took bread;* (24.) *And when he had given thanks, he brake it, and said, Take, eat: this is my body which is broken for you: this do, in remembrance of me.*
(27.) *And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of it.*	(23.) *And he took the cup, and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them; and they all drank of it.*	(20.) *Likewise also the cup after supper, saying, This cup is the New Testament in my blood, which is shed for you.*	(25.) *After the same manner he also took the cup, when he had supped, saying, This cup is the New Testament in my blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me.*
(28.) *For this is my blood of the New Testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins.*	(24.) *And he said unto them, This is my blood of the New Testament, which is shed for many.*		
(29.) *But I say unto you, I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom.*	(25.) *Verily I say unto you, I will drink no more of the fruit of the vine, until that day that I drink it new in the kingdom of God.*	(18.) *For I say unto you, I will not drink of the fruit of the vine, until the kingdom of God shall come.*	
(30.) *And when they had sung an hymn, they went out into the Mount of Olives.*	(26.) *And when they had sung an hymn, they went out into the Mount of Olives.*		

These different passages have been put together, in a harmony as follows:—

The Lord Jesus, the same night in which he was

betrayed, as they were eating, took bread: and when he had blessed it, and given thanks, he brake it, and gave it to the disciples, and said, Take, eat; this is my body, which is given and broken for you; this do, in remembrance of me.

And, after the same manner, he also took the cup, after supper, and gave thanks, and gave it to them; saying, Drink ye all of it; and they all drank of it, and he said unto them, This is my blood of the New Testament, and this cup is the New Testament in my blood, which is shed for you and for many for the remission of sins. This do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me.

Verily, I say unto you, I will drink no more of the fruit of the vine, until that day when I shall drink it new with you in the kingdom of my Father, in the kingdom of God. And when they had sung an hymn, they went out into the Mount of Olives.

It is evident that there are several expressions here used which require to be duly understood, before we can intelligently observe this ordinance. Why are bread and wine to be used on this occasion? In what sense was the bread our Saviour's body? How was the cup his blood? What is the meaning of his body given and broken; and his blood shed for us? Why are we to eat this bread, and drink this cup? What is the nature of the New Testament? In what views are we to remember Christ, and what is the necessity and benefit of so doing? The consideration of some of these particulars will properly come in this chapter; but others of them which relate more directly to the great doctrines of the gospel, will require more full discussion in distinct chapters.

Do you ask WHY BREAD WAS APPOINTED TO BE

USED?—We reply, it was designedly at hand when our Lord appointed the institution, and, being used in the Passover, it connects the two ordinances, and it is a most significant emblem of that which it was intended to represent. It is not merely in the mode of its preparation for our use, but as when prepared, it is the ordinary support of man, the most common, necessary, and wholesome kind of food. What then can better represent that incarnate, suffering, and dying Saviour, who is the food of our souls?

Do you ask WHY WINE WAS APPOINTED? We reply, this was also designedly at hand, and being used in the Passover, it also connects the two ordinances, and the preparation of wine is likewise a significant emblem of our Saviour's sufferings. Wine, too, is in its properties strengthening and exhilarating; *Give wine unto those that be of heavy hearts;* (in the margin, *bitter of soul,* Prov. xxxi. 6.) It is *wine that maketh glad* such hearts, Psalm civ. 15. And in this view, wine is an apt figure of that blood of Christ, which being forced from his bruised body, and shed for our sins, is suited to revive and comfort the fainting spirit of man.*

* The direction to drink *wine,* as representing the blood of Christ, seems contrary to the analogy of the Jewish dispensation, where both people and priests were forbidden to taste the blood in any case; nor were the priests even permitted to eat the flesh of the sin-offering. Some have supposed that our Lord designed to point out the nearer communion which we have with God, and the clearer discoveries of the way of pardon through the gospel. "We have," says Bishop Patrick, "such a token and pledge of forgiveness by this sacrifice, as the ancient people of God had not, of forgiveness of their offences by the blood that was offered at their altar." Heb. xiii. 10. Perhaps, however, it might serve to intimate more strongly, as it doubtless would, by its being contrary to the current of all their prejudices, that Christ actually *poured out his soul unto death,* in giving his blood; it may also show that the words of our Lord in this ordinance will not bear, in any

Do you ask, WHY ARE BOTH BREAD AND WINE APPOINTED? Various reasons may be given for this. Some have thought that the thing may be doubled, to show the certainty and importance of it. Gen. xli. 32. But there are other more forcible reasons. The separation of the blood from the body marks more strongly the death of the victim as a sacrifice. The blood was considered in a peculiar way to be the life of every living creature, and that which made *an atonement for the soul.* Lev. xvii. 11. Again it is said, (ver. 14.) with marked emphasis, *It is the life of all flesh; the blood of it is for the life thereof; therefore I said unto the children of Israel, ye shall eat the blood of no manner of flesh: for the life of all flesh is the blood thereof: whosoever eateth it shall be cut off.* In the appointment, therefore, of the blood as distinct from the body, there was another strong intimation, that our Saviour gives his life for us—that HIS SOUL *was made an offering for sin.* The Jews could not hear the command, *This is my blood, drink ye all of it,* without thinking of his life being offered up for ours. The broken bread was very descriptive of our Saviour's humiliation, but does not afford that complete and striking emblem of his death, which under these

view, a literal interpretation. The peculiar direction that *all* should drink of it, and the assurance that *all* did drink, is observable in connexion with the practice of the Roman Catholics to deny the cup to the laity. Nor does the propriety of that practice appear from the assertion sometimes made, that "all then present were ministers;" for, not to say that the disciples could at that time be only considered as believers in general, such a view of the matter would prove too much; it would go to show that the laity should be denied the bread as well as the wine.

The order of the words is instructive. It is first *take,* and then *eat,* Christ is to be ours in possession and claim, and afterwards ours in fruition and enjoyment; and then, *this is my body,* to intimate that the sacred elements are not properly to be called the body of Christ till eaten.

circumstances, wine poured out, the figure of his blood shed, does. Besides, as meat and drink are both necessary to nourish us, so the two figures, of the body and blood, seem given to show us that there is in Christ Jesus a complete nourishment for the soul, and that we need only look to him for every part of our salvation. To omit either bread or wine is to depart from that primitive institution, on which the whole authority of this ordinance rests.

We have now to explain in WHAT SENSE THE BREAD WAS OUR SAVIOUR'S BODY AND THE CUP HIS BLOOD. The previous remarks will have prepared the way for a right understanding of these words. Let us remember, also, the general nature of expressions used in the appointment of divine ordinances. Of circumcision it is said, *This is my covenant*, (Gen. xvii. 10.) though it was only the token of the covenant. Of eating the paschal lamb, it is said, *It is the Lord's passover*, (Exod. xii. 11.) though it was only the sign of his passing over the Israelites. St. Paul calls the manna *spiritual meat*, and the water that flowed from the rock *spiritual drink*, and says, *that rock was Christ*. 1 Cor. x. 3, 4. So Christ is called *our passover*. 1 Cor. v. 7. Amid these obvious figures in similar circumstances, there can be no difficulty with an unbiassed mind, as to the true interpretation of these words. The disciples do not appear to have seen any obscurity in them, nor to have asked our Lord to explain them. They had before been reproved for a literal interpretation of our Lord's direction, *Take heed and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees*. Matt. xvi. 6—9. Mark viii. 15—21. They had seen how the Jews had erred at Capernaum, (John vi. 53.) through literally inter-

preting similar expressions to those under consideration; at which time our Lord told them, *the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit and they are life.* John vi. 63. And when our Lord instituted this ordinance, they were not in the least danger of imagining the bread and wine to be the actual body and blood of the Saviour, because he was then conversing with them. From these considerations it is evident that the declarations of our Lord, on this occasion, by no means require an interpretation so altogether remote from common sense and experience, as either the transubstantiation of the Roman Catholics,* or the consubstantiation of the Lutherans. Had our Lord meant that any constant miracle of

* The acknowledged and authorised document of the Roman Catholics respecting transubstantiation, is here recited from the Canons of the Council of Trent. That Council denounced the following curse!!!

'If any one shall say, that in the holy sacrament of the Eucharist, there remains the substance of bread and wine, together with the body or blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, and shall deny that singular or wonderful conversion of the whole substance of the bread into his body, and of the whole substance of wine into his blood, there remaining only the species, that is, accidents of bread and wine, which conversion the Catholic Church very aptly calls transubstantiation, —let him be accursed.' See Session 13. can. 2.

This doctrine was introduced by Paschasius Radburtus, in the ninth century, and was at first, even in that dark age, vigorously opposed. The Book of Bertram, on the subject, in that century, has been preserved, is acknowledged to be genuine by the most learned of the Catholics, and was very useful at the Reformation. Ridley and Cranmer were indebted to it for correct views of the Lord's Supper; views which they have embodied in the formularies of our own Church. The following extracts will show Bertram's sentiments. 'As to the substance of the creatures, what they were before consecration, they remain after it. Bread and wine they were before, and after consecration, we see, they continue beings of the same kind and nature.'

'It is the body of Christ, yet not corporal but spiritual; it is the blood of Christ, yet not corporal but spiritual: so that nothing is here to be understood corporally, but spiritually.' (205.)

'Both by testimonies out of the Holy Scriptures, and of the Fathers, it is most evidently demonstrated, that the bread which is called the

such kind was to be performed by his ministers, and believed by his people, how different would have been his expressions! The words are not, "This is now, and will be ever hereafter, when you meet together, my transubstantiated and real body,"—or, "now let it and ever hereafter be changed into my body,"—but merely, "*This is my body.*" As he said "*I am the true vine,*" "*I am the door,*" meaning they were a figure of him; so the bread was the emblem, figure, or token of our Saviour's body, and the wine of his blood. Just as in seeing a bust of the king, we should say, "This is the king!" so does our Saviour say, "*This is my body!*"* There was a pe-

body of Christ, and the cup which is called the blood of Christ, is a figure, because it is a mystery.' (255.)

'The bread and blood which is placed upon the altar, is set there for a figure, or in remembrance of the Lord's death, that what was really done long since, may be called to our present remembrance; that having his passion in our mind, we may be made partakers of that divine gift, whereby we are saved from death, knowing well that when we shall come to the vision of Christ, we shall need no such instruments to admonish us, what his infinite goodness was pleased to suffer for our sakes; for we shall see him face to face; we shall understand, not by the outward admonition of temporal things, but by the contemplation of the very thing itself, how much we are obliged to give thanks to the Author of our salvation.' (259.)

These extracts are taken from the valuable edition of Bertram, which was published in 1688. The work is both curious and satisfactory, as to the sentiments of the fathers previous to Bertram, and of the church in general in his age. Cranmer, in his Treatise on the Sacrament, closely follows Bertram.

One great danger to be feared from the Roman Catholics, is the subtilty with which they cover the grossest errors, and the plausible appearance they give to the most dangerous delusions. The attempt of Fran. a Sancta Clara, in a work published in 1634, to explain the Thirty-nine Articles of the English Church, so as to give them a Roman Catholic sense, when many of them directly oppose the Romish doctrines, is a specimen of this subtilty.

* The old Hebrew and the Syriac possess no word that answers to our English terms "signify" or "represent." See Gen. xli. 26, 27. Dan. xvii. 17—24. Gal. iv. 24, 25. Rev. i. 20. They use the substantive verb for this term. Our Lord could not, therefore, according to the ordinary idiom of the language, have expressed himself otherwise.

culiar propriety in the expression which he made use of, when we consider the institution as appointed in remembrance of his sacrifice, and as declaring the establishment of a new covenant, ratified as the old had been, by the shedding of blood, and our communion in its blessings. This will be more fully pointed out in the subsequent chapter.

The expression used in giving the cup, *This is my blood*, must be interpreted as a figurative expression. The cup manifestly denotes the wine in the cup, and that wine was the figure of our Saviour's blood. And one admitted figure surely ought to make those who would be disposed to insist on a literal interpretation hesitate in their statements.

But when the writer remembers how the most eminent servants of God have contended with each other on this subject, he cannot but add an earnest desire that it might please God that all who love our Saviour in sincerity, might learn to lay aside fierce disputes about that appointment, which is peculiarly calculated, when rightly viewed, to fill our hearts with love to him, and love to each other; and that all his people, desiring in simplicity of heart to believe what he has declared, and to practise what he commands, might ever seek to edify each other in love.

Having in this chapter explained several of the expressions in the appointment of the Lord's Supper, we shall proceed to consider in subsequent chapters, more at large, those important doctrines directly connected with it.

CHAPTER II.

THE ATONEMENT MADE BY THE DEATH OF CHRIST.

In instituting the Lord's Supper, our Saviour states, that his *body* was *given* and *broken* for his disciples, and his *blood* was *shed for* them, and *for many, for the remission of sins.*

There is an evident reference in these words, to the sacrifices of the law of Moses, which were figurative of the one great sacrifice of Christ. The epistle to the Hebrews shews this sufficiently. A body broken, and blood shed for the remission of sins, exhibit the meaning and intent of the Mosaic sacrifices.

Those sacrifices, and that of Christ, are thus contrasted in the Hebrews. (ix. 11.) *But Christ being come, an High Priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building: neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood, he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us. For if the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh, how much more shall*

the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your consciences from dead works to serve the living God.

Indeed the blood of the sacrifice was in the law of Moses so indispensable to the pardon of sin, that we are assured, *without shedding of blood is no remission.* Heb. ix. 22. The reason is given in Lev. xvii. 11. *For the life of the flesh is in the blood, and I have given it to you upon the altar to make an atonement for your souls, for it is the blood that maketh atonement for the soul.*

The word *atonement* in our language signifies *agreement:* or the means by which agreement or reconciliation is made. The general meaning of the original Hebrew word is *to hide or cover.* When it refers to sin, it means sin forgiven, remitted, or expiated, through the legal rite appointed for that purpose.*

The Levitical atonement, in all cases, produced the effect of fitting for the divine service. Where moral character was concerned, (which in one view was the case, even when atonement was made for the holy place, &c. for they were unclean through the transgressions of the people, Lev. xvi. 16—19,) the atonement was an act of propitiation, being the appointed way for making the Divine Being propitious and favourable to his people. So that atonement and reconciliation, or forgiveness, were thus intimately connected.

By the atonement made by the death of Christ, we mean, then, that the sufferings and death of our Lord were accepted as a sacrifice for sin, in regard to which God forgives our iniquities.

Were there no other proofs of this doctrine than

* See Magee on the Atonement, and Wardlaw on the Socinian Controversy.

those expressions used in the appointment of the Lord's Supper, they would establish it. But it has pleased God to express so important a truth in a great variety of ways.

Before we quote additional proofs of this great doctrine, let us briefly notice the dignity of the victim who gave himself up as a sacrifice. *God was manifest in the flesh;* He who is *over all, God blessed for ever*; *Jehovah our Righteousness;* the *Mighty God;* the *Everlasting Father;* the *Alpha and the Omega;* the *beginning and the ending, which is, and which was, and which is to come;* He *was made flesh and dwelt among us.* By this mysterious and incomprehensible union of the divine and human natures in the person of our Lord, an infinite value was given to his sufferings and death, so that *his blood cleanseth from all sin; he is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.* It is this view alone that speaks peace to the troubled conscience. When a man is truly awakened to a sense of the multitude and the magnitude of his transgressions, the infinite majesty of Him against whom he has offended, and the true desert and tremendous consequences of his sins, he then feels the value of an atonement made by one who is God as well as man, and rejoices in it as that which can alone be a sufficient satisfaction for his guilt.

What then do the scriptures say of the sufferings and death of the divine Redeemer? In the Old Testament we find various testimonies to his atonement. Thus in the 53d of Isaiah, we read, *The Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all—He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities, the chastisement of our peace was upon him, and with his*

stripes we are healed.—When thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed. He was foretold by Daniel *as the Messiah to be cut off, but not for himself.* The appointed period of his coming was fixed, *to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity.* The New Testament language is still more express and decisive—*The Son of Man came to give his life a ransom for many.* Matt. xx. 28. *He died for the ungodly.* Rom. v. 6. God hath *made him to be sin* (a sin-offering) *for us who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.* 2 Cor. v. 21. *He gave himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God.* Eph. v. 2. *He has reconciled both* (Jew and Gentile) *unto God, in one body by the cross.* Eph. ii. 16. *Once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself. Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many.* Heb. ix. 26, 28. *Who, his own self, bare our sins in his own body on the tree.* 1 Peter ii. 24.

These are but a brief selection of passages, which show that the all-important truth of an atonement for sin, made by the Son of God, is confirmed by a great variety of expressions, and by repeated testimonies and declarations. How very different would have been the mode of expression, had Christ merely died as an example, and pattern of patience and long-suffering! How easy and natural would it have been for all the sacred writers to have used another phraseology, had they designed to convey any other instruction than that which is obvious at the first glance, to every simple and humble mind! The doctrine of the atonement will from such passages be manifested to those who read the Scriptures with an unbiassed and unprejudiced mind!

The great design of this atonement is clearly and full explained by St. Paul, in the 3rd of Romans. After having shewn the universal sinfulness and guilt of man, he goes on to declare the way of acceptance with the holy and righteous God, in these words,—*Being justified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus; whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation, through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; to declare, I say, at this time his righteousness, that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus.*

We may observe in this passage, that the Apostle notices two leading effects connected with, and resulting from the atonement of Christ. It illustrates the divine perfections, and at the same time brings salvation to the guilty.

IT ILLUSTRATES THE DIVINE PERFECTIONS. The doctrine of Christ's propitiation is the solution of an apparently inexplicable difficulty. The holy and righteous God, who had asserted that he would *not acquit the guilty*, and who had declared, *he that justifieth the wicked, and he that condemneth the just, even they both are an abomination to the Lord*, had yet for four thousand years been pardoning and blessing sinful man, and was then dispensing pardon to believers through the world. This procedure the Apostle shows is consistent with the justice of God, and the truth of his word, by the death of Christ being an atonement for sin. The strictness, purity, and excellence of God's holy law are fully manifested, his authority is preserved, the ends of justice are obtained, even in a more impressive way, by the incarnation, sufferings and death of the divine sub-

stitute, than they would have been merely by the punishment of the guilty creature.

While the mercy of God is fully displayed, his abhorrence of sin is at the same time manifested in the strongest way. Dr. Wardlaw has well expressed this. Speaking of the substitution of Immanuel as a voluntary surety, to bear the curse of the law in the room of the guilty, he says, "In this substitution we see displayed, in a manner unutterably affecting and awful, the *holy purity* of the divine nature, for no testimony can be conceived more impressive of infinite abhorrence of sin than the sufferings and death of the Son of God. Here, too, we behold the *immutable justice* of the divine government, inflicting the righteous penalty of a violated law. It is to be considered as a fixed principle of the divine government, that sin must be punished; that if the sinner be pardoned, it must be in a way that marks and publishes the evil of his offence, This is also effected by substitution, and as far as we can judge, could not be effected in any other way. In inflicting the sentence against transgression on the voluntary and all-sufficient Surety, Jehovah, while he clears the sinner, does not clear his sins. Although clothed with the thunders of vindictive justice against transgression, he wears to the transgressor the smile of reconciliation and peace; he dispenses the blessings of mercy from the throne of his holiness; and while exercising grace to the guilty, he appears in the characters, equally lovely and venerable, of

> ——— The sinner's friend,
> And sin's eternal foe.

"In this way then all the ends of public justice are fully answered. The law retains its complete unmitigated perfection, is *magnified and made honourable*, the dignity and authority of the Divine Government are maintained and even elevated—all the perfections of Deity are gloriously illustrated and exhibited in sublime harmony. Such a view of the Divine Being is presented on the cross, as is precisely calculated to inspire and maintain (to maintain too with a power which will increase its influence, the more closely and seriously the view is contemplated) the two great principles of a holy life, the LOVE and the FEAR of God; filial attachment, freedom, and confidence, combined with humble reverence and holy dread."

The importance of the subject, and the justice and excellence of Dr. Wardlaw's remarks, will justify the length of the quotation.

We may observe also that salvation is thus become, as it respects Christ and those for whom he died, an act of divine justice as well as divine mercy. God, as he is a just God, does not condemn believers, since Christ has borne the punishment of their sins, and purchased them for himself. Blessed be God, our pardon and acceptance in Jesus Christ, is now built on that very attribute which is so dreadful and alarming to the offending sinner! That which seemed the main bar against our acceptance, is now become the very ground why God accepts. Justice and mercy both triumph together. God remains righteous, and yet rebellious man may be for ever blessed.

Thus the cross of Christ gives the brightest display of all the divine perfections. It is a glass in which

all created intelligence may see and discover, in a way that they never otherwise could, the glory of God's wisdom, power, righteousness, justice, mercy, and truth.

While God is glorified, through the same atonement A WAY OF SALVATION IS PROVIDED FOR SINNERS. We shall have occasion, in considering afterwards the nature of the New Covenant, to enter into a fuller view of the nature of this salvation, and therefore will here only briefly notice some of the more direct blessings which are obtained by this atonement.

There is, first, FORGIVENESS. *We have redemption through the blood of Christ, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace.* The Apostle, in the passage in Romans above referred to, also shews that God *is* righteous in *the remission of sins that are past.* As if he had said, the sins committed before the coming of Christ, were, through the infinite compassion of God, forgiven on account of the propitiation that was to be effected by his death. All the sin of man, therefore, that ever was or will be forgiven, was forgiven through this atoning sacrifice. God's exacting the punishment of sin in the death of Christ, explained the mystery of divine patience and truth, in not punishing our first parents, Adam and Eve, with instant death; and in bearing, for so many thousand years, with the wickedness of mankind; and it cleared the divine righteousness, and accounted for his forbearance with the rebellion and sin of his creatures. The same atonement is still amply sufficient to cover the whole of our transgressions against the divine law. The pardon of sin, of all sin, of the greatest and most aggravated sins,

the free and entire removal of the load of guilt from the conscience,—that is the glory of the gospel of Christ.

The benefit of the atonement of Christ is also exhibited in another light, as the cause of the free JUSTIFICATION of the believer. His sins are not only pardoned, but he is freed from the penalty of sin. *Being justified freely by his grace,* is the great blessing which the Apostle grounds on Christ's propitiation. By this redemption of Christ, a way is provided for the guilty sinner being accounted and dealt with as altogether righteous. God whose judgment is according to truth, whose sentence is final and decisive, is *the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus.*

Nor can we forbear noticing also SANCTIFICATION, as another effect connected with the atonement. It is, as we have seen, peculiarly calculated to promote genuine love to God and man. *Ye are bought with a price; therefore, glorify God in your body and in your spirit which are his—If God so loved us, we ought also to love one another.* His unspeakable love furnishes the most powerful and attractive motive to obedience; and adds new force to every other consideration which calls on us to obey the will of God.

Let us farther observe, how we PARTAKE OF THE BLESSINGS OF THE ATONEMENT: for in vain, as to our salvation, has Christ shed his precious blood, and glorified God and procured blessings for man, if we are not *partakers of the benefit.* On this important point, the Scriptures are very express. It is *through faith in his blood* that God is propitious to us. God justifies *him that believeth in Jesus.* Rom. iii. 25, 26. *To him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness.*

Rom. iv. 5. Similar passages are very numerous. The nature of faith will be considered more at large in the following chapter.

We would now press on the reader's attention the importance of the subject. It is not a matter of mere speculation and theory, but a principal, a practical, and a most cheering truth, revealed for our unspeakable benefit. The subject is of infinite magnitude. It is God's appointed plan of salvation: it is his only plan: *there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.* Surely nothing can be conceived of more immense moment to the human race, than that which concerns the salvation of innumerable millions of immortal souls, their peace and holiness here, their deliverance from eternal woe, and their obtaining eternal life. O that every reader may so seek an interest in this salvation, as to enjoy its blessings, and to feel in his own happy experience, what an animating motive the atoning death of Christ is, to a life of holiness and devotedness to that God who so loved us, that *he spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all.* We cannot speak of this great subject merely in the language of cold statement. Christian reader! let our hearts magnify and praise the Lord. *The Lord hath done great things for us, whereof we are glad.* Let our songs ascend up to his throne. Let us join the heavenly host in their never-ceasing hymn—*Worthy is the Lamb that was slain, to receive power and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing.*

The view which has thus been given of the death of Christ appeared needful to enable us to form right conceptions of the Lord's Supper. In this view

of his death, well might a solemn ordinance be appointed, for its perpetual exhibition and commemoration.* Dr. Doddridge justly remarks, "I apprehend this ordinance of the Eucharist to have so plain a reference to the atonement or satisfaction of Christ, and to do so solemn an honour to the fundamental doctrines of the Gospel, that I cannot but believe that while this sacred institution continues in the Church, (as it will undoubtedly do to the end of the world) it will be impossible to root that doctrine out of the minds of plain humble Christians."

As we have seen, the very words appointing the ordinance bring before us the doctrine of the atonement, by telling us of Christ's body given and broken for us, and his blood shed for the remission of our sins.

We shall further see, in the next chapter, how we participate in the atonement of Christ.

* How dreadfully the Socinians would pervert this ordinance, may be seen in the following extract from one of their writers. "If the Unitarian Society, on their English Anniversary Festival, were to consecrate the first goblet to the immortal memory of the great founder of their faith, they would more faithfully copy the spirit of this institution, than any rival creedsman, and would accomplish the association of religion with the rational and habitual pleasures of mankind." Dr. Gregory on this makes the following observations. "This attempt at transmuting the orgies of Bacchus into a Christian rite, will not succeed with those who have beheld by faith *the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world.*"

CHAPTER III.

ON FAITH IN CHRIST'S ATONEMENT.

THE Lord's Supper is manifestly an institution designed only for Christians, for sincere believers in Jesus Christ. It is well known that the primitive churches were very particular in exercising a strict discipline, to keep the unbelieving from that holy table. Indeed, our attendance there without faith in Him, would be a mere act of hypocrisy.

Hence it becomes important for us to understand the nature of faith. The idea is in itself so simple, as rather to be obscured than elucidated by definition. Faith in God's word is the same as faith in man's word, a sure belief of what is said.* True faith is a practical belief of the word of God, and especially of the record which he hath given of his Son. *If we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater; he that believeth not God, hath made him a liar, because he believeth not the record that God gave of his Son.*

* The scriptures accurately describe it to be the *substance* (υποστασις, *confidence,*) *of things hoped for; the evidence* (ελεγχος, *conviction,*) *of things not seen.* Heb. xi. 1.

The Holy Scriptures illustrate the nature and effects of this faith in a variety of ways, describing it as a coming to Christ, looking unto him, receiving him, putting him on, trusting in him, living upon him, and the like. These figures very strikingly exhibit the inward workings of the believer's heart.

Repentance and faith are most intimately connected in the Holy Scriptures. Matt. xxi. 32. Mark i. 15. Acts xx. 21. There is no repentance without faith, and no lively faith without repentance. It has been observed, that repentance and faith are only two branches of the same vital root, of *the new creature in Christ Jesus*.

The object in this chapter is not, however, to explain the nature of faith in general, or faith in Christ, (which is a believing all that the scriptures say of him as a divine Saviour, and so receiving him in all his offices, as our Prophet, Priest, and King,) but to bring before the reader the nature and importance of *faith in his blood*. Rom. iii. 25. There is in the Lord's Supper, when duly received, a special act of faith in the atonement of Christ. This is a point of the utmost importance, as it regards our individual salvation. Our holiness too, and our comfort, as well as our duly partaking of this ordinance, are closely connected with right views on this subject.

There are some expressions in a discourse recorded in the 6th of John,* which have often been referred to the Lord's Supper, and which will assist

* It is observable, that this evangelist, who omits the mention of the appointment of the external ordinances of baptism and the Lord's Supper, dwells most at large on the spiritual import of those ordinances, regeneration by the Holy Spirit, and faith in the atonement of Christ.

us to understand the nature of this faith. The circumstances of that discourse were these. The miracle of feeding the multitude with bread, and their thence following our Lord, having led him to exhort them to *labour for the meat which endureth to everlasting life*, they ask him, *What shall we do that we might work the works of God?* His reply was, *This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent.* The Jews ask for a proof of his mission, and tell him of the manna which Moses had given. This leads our Lord to show them a better food; *I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger, and he that believeth on me shall never thirst.* He farther explains himself, when he says, *The bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world.* The Jews were stumbled at this; but our Lord only the more solemnly asserts, *Verily, verily, I say unto you, except ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you. Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day. For my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed.*

To prevent any misunderstanding of these words by giving them a mere literal interpretation, our Lord afterwards told his disciples, *It is the Spirit that quickeneth, the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit and they are life.*

The great subject inculcated in this discourse, is such a faith in Christ as leads the soul to rely on his giving his flesh for the life of the world. The discourse does not directly refer to the Lord's Supper, for there is not in the whole statement the slightest mention or hint of that appointment, nor could his

hearers have had any clear understanding of his words, if he were supposed to be speaking of an ordinance never appointed, nor even intimated before. In such a case, would not our Lord's words have wanted that distinctness and precision which usually characterize his discourses?

Our Lord here takes occasion from what had previously passed, to illustrate the nature of faith in him, by food received for the support of the body. By *the flesh of the Son of Man and his blood*, he means his becoming man and dying for us; (Heb. ii. 14.) by his flesh being given *for the life of the world*, he points out the atonement which he would by his death make for mankind; and by *eating* that flesh, and *drinking* that blood, he shews how we partake of this blessing. Faith is to the mind, what partaking of food is to the animal frame. We know that before food can nourish us, it must be received, eaten, and digested: and so before any sentiments or statements can benefit us, we must believe them and dwell upon them; or, (as in the same allusion the Collect expresses it,) we must "inwardly digest them." The truths of scripture, and the doctrines of salvation by Jesus Christ, can only influence us, and produce in us corresponding affections, as they are received,—as they are credited and thought upon.

Thus the doctrine of the atonement may be known in a general way; we may be able to state it accurately, and prove it strongly, without our being influenced by it, or having any interest in it; in order to obtain the blessing ourselves, we must *receive the atonement*, Rom. v. 11, 17. Saving faith has a special reference to this doctrine. The faith by which

Christians under the gospel dispensation, are justified and accounted righteous before God, is such a persuasion of the truth of the divine declarations respecting the sacrifice of Jesus Christ, as makes the soul cleave to him, and produces a sure trust and reliance upon his obedience unto death, as our only and all-sufficient ground of hope for the pardon of sin, peace with God, the gift of eternal life; and makes us apply to him for his Holy Spirit to purify us, for strength and every spiritual blessing. When we are "enabled thus to believe and come to God with our load of guilt and misery, not trusting in our own righteousness, but in his manifold and great mercies, as flowing to sinners through the sacrifice and atonement of Christ, then we find peace of conscience, and a quiet mind." Our souls are satisfied and strengthened, and our hearts are set at liberty to love and serve God with gratitude and entire devotedness.

The Church of England speaks very decisively on this subject. "The right and true Christian faith, is not only to believe that Holy Scripture, and all the foresaid articles of our faith, are true, but also to have a sure trust and confidence in God's merciful promises, to be saved from everlasting damnation by Christ; whereof doth follow a loving heart to obey his commandments."*

Only conceive the state of mind of one awakened to a true knowledge of the law of God in its reasonableness, its purity, and its extent: and a true sense of his own exceeding sinfulness. He sees that he is justly condemned, heaven is forfeited, divine wrath

* See Homily on Salvation.

is incurred, and any moment may plunge him into irremediable and endless ruin; and then say whether there may not be desires wrought in the heart, that can be well compared to hunger and thirst; and whether there be not in the salvation of Jesus Christ, that which may justly be called the bread of life, and the fountain of living waters; and whether faith in his doctrines may not nourish and support the soul, just as much as the most suitable food does the body! Bread or flesh is not more adapted to meet the necessities of the hungry, nor wine to strengthen and revive the weak, than the atonement of the incarnate Saviour is to supply the wants of the convinced, humbled, and penitent sinner. Nothing else indeed will supply his wants. Archbishop Cranmer (whose Treatise on the Sacrament is full of instruction,) justly says, "There is no kind of meat that is comfortable to the soul, but only the death of Christ's blessed body; nor any kind of drink that can quench its thirst, but only the blood-shedding of our Saviour Christ." Let us then, when we receive the Lord's Supper, spiritually feed on Christ as our all-sufficient and all-satisfying Saviour.

It is not one act of faith only that marks the Christian. *The just shall live by faith.* When we dwell on what Christ has done for us, and look to him for grace and strength, we receive continued supplies of spiritual food. Worldly things weaken our spiritual strength, and deaden our devout affections. Satan tempts us, and a corrupt heart leads us astray. In the midst of these dangers, it is only in proportion as we constantly come to Christ, and *receive out of his fulness grace for grace*, that we are strong and vigorous in the Christian life. Just as the body lives by

receiving food from day to day, and thereby increases and grows from infancy to manhood, so the soul lives by this faith in Christ, and grows from strength to strength till we come to *a perfect man.*

The scriptures speak very strongly of the BLESSINGS connected with this faith in Christ. They are stated in the 6th chapter of John in many varied expressions. Without this faith we have no spiritual life; through faith we have union with Christ, support, strength, consolation, and eternal bliss. The promise of eternal life may well be peculiarly cheering and animating to us. Observe how solemnly our Lord declares, (verse 47) *Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that believeth on me hath everlasting life.* Who can calculate the magnitude of this blessing? All the glories of this world fade before it. To be happy, and that for ever! what heart can imagine all that is comprehended in everlasting life? Look only at one point in the promise, (verse 54) *I will raise him up at the last day.* Place only the resurrection before your eyes. The last trump is sounded—the heavens pass away with a great noise—the LORD HIMSELF descends. In this tremendous day, amid the wreck of worlds, who shall stand when HE appeareth? It is the Judge of all mankind, and *who shall abide the day of his coming?* Whom will he raise up and place in safety? See above, the mansion of bright and eternal glory? Behold, below, the dreary and horrible abode of never-ending woe! O Christian reader, in the day of the resurrection, what a blessing beyond all description will it be to belong to Christ, and to have his promises engaged to raise *you* up to life and glory! Well, *whosoever believeth in him shall not perish, but have everlasting life.* You

may safely build for eternity on his faithfulness. He has all power and might to fulfil his promises; all truth and willingness to perform them. O look unto Jesus, and be ye saved.

We may hitherto in this chapter appear to have departed from the direct subject of the Lord's Supper, but what has been said will tend to explain that feeding on Christ by faith, which is at once enjoined and signified by this ordinance. Though our Lord's discourse in the 6th of John has not a primary reference to his Last Supper, yet that institution points out the same actings of faith which are illustrated by the instruction in that remarkable passage. Both the literal and spiritual feeding are happily expressed together in the address to the communicant, "Take and eat this, in remembrance that Christ died for thee, and feed on him *in thy heart* by faith with thanksgiving." Archbishop Cranmer very plainly and strikingly expresses the same ideas—"The true eating and drinking of the body and blood of Christ is, with a constant and lively faith to believe that he gave his body and shed his blood on the cross for us, and that he does so join and incorporate himself to us, that he is our head and we his members, and flesh of his flesh, and bone of his bone, having him dwelling in us, and we in him. And herein stands the whole effect and strength of this sacrament. And this faith God works inwardly in our hearts by his Holy Spirit, and confirms the same outwardly to our ears, by the hearing of his word, and to our other senses, by the eating and drinking of the sacramental bread and wine in his holy supper."

Let it be your desire, then, Christian reader, when

you receive the outward emblems of his body and blood, by the grace of the Holy Spirit, and through faith, afresh to receive Christ himself as your only and your complete Saviour. Augustine denies that men can carry away from this sacrament any more than they can collect in the vessel of faith. Indeed, it is only as faith is in exercise, and as you are really looking to Christ, by and through the outward elements, that this institution will be of profit to you. It loses its whole design as to your individual good. if you are not depending by faith on the atonement of Christ, and applying afresh for an interest in his great salvation. Besides, the Lord's Supper shews us how the death of Christ is applied to our benefit. As the bread and wine represent the body and blood of our Saviour, so the eating and drinking those elements point out that act of faith by which we apply to our own benefit the merits of his death. Whenever, then, you go to this holy table, lift up the eye of faith to the crucified Redeemer, dying for your sins, come with your burden to him, and so shall you *find rest unto your souls.*

CHAPTER IV.

ON THE NEW COVENANT.

In appointing the Holy Communion, we have seen, our Lord calls the cup *the New Testament in his blood.* We purpose in this chapter to explain the meaning of this expression, and briefly to state the nature of that dispensation, which was secured to us through the atoning sacrifice of Christ.

The term, which is here rendered Testament, is a translation of the Hebrew word בְּרִית, which is commonly rendered Covenant.* We do not find that the

* There have been considerable differences of opinion respecting the meaning of the Hebrew word בְּרִית, and the Greek word διαθηκη, usually translated *covenant*. The author thinks that his readers will be interested in an abstract of some of the principal authorities which have fallen in his way.

On the Hebrew word בְּרִית, Simon, in his Hebrew Lexicon, gives us the term Covenant as the general meaning; and then, referring to the annexed passages, he says it denotes metonymically, a *promise*. (Numb. xviii. 19; 2 Sam. xxiii. 5;) a *constitution* or *statute*; (Jer. xxxiii. 20.) and a *precept*, (Jer. xxxiv. 15.) because these are wont to be joined to covenants; the *Decalogue*, (Num. x. 33. Deut. iv. 13; ix. 9—11;) and the sign of the Covenant. Genesis xvii. 13.

In *Leigh's Critica Sacra*, it is noticed, that it signifies any disposition, institution, or declaration of will, council, or promise, or any thing of that kind, whether that disposition be entered into by one, or by many; whether by the pure engagement of one, or mutual agreement and restipulation between parties.

Hebrew word is ever used in the sense of a last will, and it is doubtful whether the Greek word be used in that signification in the New Testament.

A Covenant is an agreement on certain terms, and supposes two or more parties. But when God is one party to that which is rendered covenant, it must be considered as meaning rather a *Dispensation*, declaring his mercy and goodness towards his sinful creatures, than a mere agreement. Isaiah lix. 21. Heb. viii. 8—13. By a dispensation, we mean that

On the GREEK word διαθηκη, Grotius remarks, that it was adopted in the Septuagint version of the Old Testament, as it was found that the original Hebrew word was of a more extensive signification than the Greek word συνθηκη, their usual word for covenant. See Poli Synopsis, vol. iv. p. ii.

Justin says, 'It signifies neither a Testament, nor a Covenant, nor an Agreement; but as the import of the word simply requires, a disposition, or institution of God.'

Schleusner gives the general interpretation to be a *disposition*; and with reference to the passage in the institution of the Lord's Supper, gives it the sense of '*a constitution, law*, or *form of religion*, or, as it is commonly called, a *Divine Œconomy*, from the manner of speaking among the Jews, who were wont to call the Mosaic religion בְּרִית, the likeness being taken from the covenants, which men are wont to enter into between themselves.'

On the use of BOTH WORDS, Dr. Gill in his body of Divinity, says—1.—It is sometimes used for an *ordinance, precept*, and *command*. Numb. xviii. 19. Jer. xxxiv. 13, 14, Deut. iv. 13.—2. A Covenant, when ascribed to God, is nothing more than a mere promise. Isaiah lix. 21. Ephes. ii. 12.—3. We often read of the covenants of God only *on one side*. Jer. xxxiii. 20. Genesis viii. 22. Genesis ix. 9—17. Hosea ii. 18. 4.—A covenant properly made between man and man, is by stipulation and re-stipulation, in which they make mutual promises, or conditions, to be performed by them. Genesis xiv. 13; xxvi. 28. 1 Sam. xx. 15, 16, 42; xxiii. 18.

Brown of Haddington also says, 'Both words may in general be rendered an ESTABLISHMENT, and this signification will answer in every place where the words are found.'

The importance of having a just view of the term, will be seen when it is remembered that it occurs above two hundred times in the Scriptures. It will be obvious that it has often a much larger signification than a mere agreement between two parties with mutual conditions.

plan of procedure, on which God acts towards those who live under it, or, as it is more briefly defined by Dr. Johnson, "the dealing of God with his creatures." This general meaning of the term rendered Covenant, seems best to convey its sense in the passage immediately under our consideration. The term is used to denote the two chief systems of religion noticed in the bible, the Jewish and the Christian. The nature and design of both these are fully declared in the Holy Scriptures; but as our Lord directly connects the celebration of the Lord's Supper with the new dispensation, it will be proper here to give a farther account of it.

It is CALLED NEW WITH REFERENCE TO THE JEWISH DISPENSATION, not having been fully manifested nor fully established as the only religion of men, till after the promulgation and lengthened continuance of that preparatory religion which was given by Moses.

It is true that the plan of this rich dispensation of grace and mercy, for the salvation of sinful man, was laid before the world began. St. Paul assures Timothy that God *hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began.* 2 Tim. i. 9. Those who obtain its blessings, are also described by St. Paul, as *chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world, that they should be holy and without blame before him in love.* Eph. i. 4. Here we see all the parties in this covenant brought to our view at once. God, the source of all blessings—men, who were to be the objects of his grace— and Christ, the mediator of the covenant, in whom all the subjects were chosen, and by whom they would ultimately be brought to eternal glory.

It is true also that it was in part manifested to man, from time to time before the Christian æra,—first, in the promise, *The seed of the woman shall bruise the head of the serpent.* Gen. iii. 15. After this, as the Apostle tells us, *To Abraham and his seed were the promises made;* and thus, as he assures us, *the covenant was confirmed before,* (that is before the law of Moses) *of God in Christ.* Gal. iii. 16, 17. The Mosaic dispensation was, in various respects, a figure, shadow, or representation of the new covenant, by its tabernacle, sacrifices, &c. As we proceed in reading the sacred volume, the promises and prophecies gradually unfold it with increasing clearness to our view. Though David's expression at the close of his life may possibly have a more direct application to the covenant made with him personally, as to the throne of Israel, yet therein the promise of Christ was included, and the words are very descriptive of the blessings of this better covenant: *He hath made with me an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things and sure—for this is all my salvation, and all my desire,* (2 Sam. xxiii. 5.); as is that expression, *The secret of the Lord is with them that fear him, and he will shew them his covenant.* Psalm xxv. 14. Several of the Psalms, as xvi. xl. lxxxix. and cx. clearly show that the holy men of old entertained, in the progress of time, ideas, and used expressions, too large for the Jewish dispensation, and applicable only to a different order of things. Isaiah almost with the clearness of the apostolical writers, brings before us that redemption on which the dispensation of grace is founded.

But notwithstanding this previous discovery of it, which doubtless engaged the faith, and raised the

hope of the servants of God, from the beginning, it is still justly styled *new*, as it was only fully revealed after the coming of Christ. It is displayed to us in that volume, which is emphatically called the New Testament, or Covenant. Christ, as the Lamb of God, *verily was fore-ordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifested in these last times for you, who by him do believe in God.* 1 Peter i. 20.

It was also only fully established by the death of Christ. Solemn promises and engagements were of old established and ratified by blood-shedding and sacrifices. Genesis xv. 8—18. Hence the Psalmist speaks of the covenant made with God by sacrifice. Psalm lv. 5. Thus the death of Christ was the sacrifice that perfected the new dispensation.

And it was yet farther illustrated and confirmed by the resurrection and ascension of Christ. Thus not only was it proved that his death was accepted as an atonement for sin, and that the divine justice was satisfied, but he was raised up from the dead, and ascended into heaven, to receive those blessings which he had purchased for sinful men, to bestow those blessings on them that believe in his name, and thus to carry on the work of salvation by supplying them, according to their individual necessities, with *grace to help in time of need*, and by filling them at proper seasons, with joy and peace in believing, through the power of the Holy Ghost.

Hence, as compared with the covenant made with Israel, on their coming out of Egypt, and as fully manifested, completed, and established by the death, and confirmed by the resurrection of Christ, as having new worship, new ordinances, and new sacraments, it is called the *new* covenant. The former dispensa-

tion is no longer necessary, and the gospel is become the statute law of the whole church of God.

Having thus seen in what respect it is a *new* covenant, we will next view it IN CONTRAST WITH THE OLD COVENANT. The Scriptures frequently illustrate this subject, by contrasting or comparing one with the other.* The Jewish was a religion for a particular nation: (Deut. iv. 31—34; vii. 6.) the Christian was designed for all nations; (1 John ii. 2. 1 Tim. ii. 4—6.) the Jewish was temporary; (Heb. viii. 7—13.) the Christian is permanent; (Heb. xii. 27, 28.) the Jewish had conditions to be performed on the ground of obtaining its blessings; (Exod. xix. 5—8.) the Christian promises those very conditions as blessings which will be freely bestowed. Jer. xxxi. 31—34; Ezek. xxxvi. 27; Rom. iii. 24; Eph. ii. 8, 9. In the first covenant, the law was written on tables of stone; but the second provides for its being written on the fleshly tables of the heart. 2 Cor. iii. 2. The mediator, priesthood, and sacrifices of the two covenants, are contrasted in the epistle to the Hebrews, to show the superior advantages of the latter dispensation.

The old covenant, as considered apart from the discoveries and promises which it contains of the new, was *a ministration of death and condemnation,* (2 Cor. iii. 7—9.) pronounced a curse on all who did not obey it perfectly, (Deut. xxvii. 15—26.) and in some cases inflicted the penalty of death, without mercy on transgressors, Heb. x. 28. The Apostle calls it *a yoke upon the neck of the disciples, which*

* See the Epistles to the Hebrews and the Galatians, passim. John i. 16, 17; 2 Cor. iii. 3—18, &c.

neither our fathers nor we were able to bear, Acts xv. 10. As a ministration of death and condemnation, it gives those who were never under it a very striking illustration of the sad state of all sinners. Those who sinned not against the light of the Jewish dispensation, were yet *under sin*, Romans iii. 9. They sinned against the light which they had, (Romans ii. 12—15.) and God *having not left himself without witness*, (Acts xiv. 17.) they were *without excuse*, Romans i. 20. But *the law entered that the offence might abound*, Romans v. 20. It discovered and detected yet more strongly the universal and deep corruption, sinfulness, and ruin of man. *The soul that sinneth, it shall die:* but *all have sinned.* Hence all, whether under the Jewish law or not, are *guilty*, (Romans iii. 19.) under a sentence of *death*, (Romans vi. 23.) and *condemned* before God, John iii. 18.

In this state the new covenant finds all men; and it is a *ministration of righteousness*, as by it condemned sinners are taught the way of obtaining righteousness, through faith in him who has atoned for our sins, and fulfilled that law which we had broken. It is also the *ministration of the Spirit*, as while it is the only doctrine through which life and salvation are communicated to sinners, a much larger measure of the gift of the Holy Ghost is communicated, and to a much wider extent, under the administration of the new covenant, than ever was under the old. John xvi. 7; Acts ii.

The old covenant conveyed many intimations of the gospel; but it was in types and shadows, or by prophecies and promises; it imparted but the beginnings of that salvation which was to be afterwards more largely bestowed. But the new covenant both

gives the substance of the emblems, and accomplishes the predictions and promises. John i. 17.

The old was, however, in the various points which had been noticed, and viewed in all its parts, a beautiful and glorious preparatory dispensation, introductory to that which was to be a blessing to the whole world, and wonderfully adapted, in its whole system, to make ready the minds of men to welcome the gospel. *The Law was our schoolmaster to bring us to Christ.* .

But *if that which was done away was glorious, how much more that which remaineth is glorious.* What cause have we to thank God, that we live under the light and blessings of the most clear and perfect dispensation which he has ever vouchsafed to his church! May it have to be said of us, *We all with open face, beholding, as in a glass, the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory!*

The above contrast will enable us the more readily to understand THE NATURE OF THE NEW COVENANT. It will be sufficient to mention some of its leading features. Fully to explain it would be to transcribe a great part of the sacred volume.

Dr. Watts gives this description of the Divine Dispensations in general. "The Public Dispensations of God towards men are those wise and holy constitutions of his will and government revealed, or some way manifested to them, in the several successive periods, or ages of the world, wherein are contained the duties which he expects from men, and the blessings which he promises, or encourages them to expect from him, here or hereafter; together with the sins which he forbids, and the punishments which he threatens to inflict on such sinners." We

purpose here to confine ourselves to a brief view of the peculiarities of the Christian Dispensation.

It discovers to us God as a RECONCILED FATHER. Col. i. 20, 21. We were *enemies in our minds by wicked works.* Man dislikes the service of that pure and holy God in whom he ought to delight, and daily offends him. He was therefore an object of God's just wrath, and if left to himself he must have perished for ever. Here, then, is manifested the boundless compassion and tender love of God. (John iii. 16; 1 John iv. 10; Rom. v. 8.) The reconciliation begins in his own infinite grace, displayed in redemption by Jesus Christ. *God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them, and hath committed unto his* ministers *the word of reconciliation.* 2 Cor. v. 19.

The new covenant is administered by a MEDIATOR. A Mediator is one who goes between parties at variance. Man, being a sinner, and so at enmity with God, the plan of grace which God devised, required the interposition of a Mediator to carry it into effect. Jesus Christ our Lord *is the Mediator of a better covenant, which was established upon better promises* than the law of Moses. When we were enemies *we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son.* But besides obtaining the blessings of this covenant, he, as Mediator, dispenses them to us. Great as they are, and freely as they are now bestowed, if their communication were to depend on the will and endeavours of fallen man, we should never receive them. The whole administration of the Gospel dispensation is in his hands. Jesus Christ *is exalted to be a prince and a Saviour, to give repentance and remission* of sins. He sends the

ministers of the new covenant, (2 Cor. iii. 6.) to gather men into his church; he makes *his people willing in the day of his power.* Psalm cx. 3. He, of his own grace and love, when they were dead in sins, quickens them by his Holy Spirit, and *purifies unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.*

The administration of this dispensation is carried on in the hearts of men, by the secret and gracious influences of the HOLY GHOST, who is sent by Jesus Christ to convince and comfort, guide and govern, illuminate and instruct, preserve and sanctify his people, while they sojourn here below, and thus prepares them for his eternal kingdom of glory above. Hence the gift of the Spirit is peculiarly promised, and much more largely dispensed under this covenant: *It shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh.*

The new covenant declares a way of SALVATION, the only way of salvation, and a salvation including deliverance from the guilt and power of sin, and the gift of eternal life. All are freely bestowed. *By grace are ye saved, through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.* Eph. ii. 8—10. Does any distressed and anxious mind inquire, *What must I do to be saved?* The answer in the new covenant is plain and express—*Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved.* Acts xvi. 31. This remarkably distinguishes it from the old covenant. The tenor of that was, *The man that* DOETH *these things shall live by them.* The tenor of the new is, *With the heart man* BELIEVETH *unto righteousness, and*

with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. Rom. x. 5—9.

The new covenant has two leading ORDINANCES, also distinguishing it from the old—Baptism, and the Lord's Supper. Baptism is the appointed ordinance for our introduction into the visible church, and the Lord's Supper manifests our continuance therein.

It is UNIVERSAL in the proposal of its blessings. Nothing can be more free, general and unlimited, than its invitations. This is a point of the utmost importance to the comfort and hope of the burdened and afflicted conscience, and the passages shewing this are delightfully clear and express. *Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters; and he that hath no money, come ye, buy, and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk, without money and without price.* Isaiah lv. 1. *Jesus stood and cried, If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink.* John vii. 37. *Whosoever will, let him take of the water of life freely*, Rev. xxii. 17. O Christian reader, let nothing tempt you to refuse so free and gracious an invitation.

Again, it contains PROMISES exactly suited to all our wants. See Jer. xxxi. 31—34: Heb. viii. 8—12. There are the blessings of redemption for the captive, pardon for the sinful, justification for the guilty, purification for the polluted, strength for the weak, wisdom for the ignorant, and help for the helpless. It proposes, in short, a full remedy for all our evils. The Scriptures are the records of its benefits. Let us search them diligently, that we may have as full a knowledge as we can of all it contains for our use. The richest promise is, indeed, eternal life. *For this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son; he that hath the Son hath*

life, and he that hath not the Son hath not life. Nor are these uncertain promises; *they are all Yea and Amen, in Christ Jesus our Lord.*

The CHIEF BLESSING of the New Covenant is its securing to us an entrance into *the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ,* (2 Peter i. 11.) This is *the inheritance of the saints in light,* Col. i. 12, 13; this is *the kingdom prepared for them from the foundation of the world,* which they *inherit when* our Lord comes in his glory, (Matt. xxv.)

The new covenant, therefore, gives the believer great SECURITY. It is *well ordered in all things and sure,* 2 Sam. xxiii. 5. While it eminently tends, by the way in which its blessings are bestowed, to manifest the divine glory, and yet to promote the happiness of man; it also most effectually provides for obedience to the holy law of God. What God, as a righteous Governor, justly demands from us as his creatures, he now, according to the beneficent tenor of the new covenant, bestows as a gracious Benefactor. Is, for instance, obedience to his laws his command as our God, and our duty as his creatures? he promises in the dispensation of grace to write his laws in our hearts, Heb. viii. 10. Is repentance equally required from us as sinful creatures? he grants repentance unto life, Acts xi. 18. Is faith in his Son requisite for our salvation? unto us *it is given to believe in his name,* Phil. i. 29. Thus it is well ordered, as it guards against the weakness and corruption of our nature, which would otherwise prevent our obtaining its blessings. The happiness of Adam in paradise, depending on the fidelity of the creature, failed; the national blessings granted to Israel, through their disobedience, were forfeited; but in

the better covenant, the fidelity of God is concerned, and he engages to work in us all that he requires of us. He promises not only not to depart from us, but that we shall not depart from him. *I will make an everlasting covenant with them, that I will not turn away from them to do them good, but I will put my fear into their heart, that they shall not depart from me.* Jer. xxxii. 40; see also Isaiah liv. 9, 10, 17. True it is, that many who have had right notions of religion, and have made a fair profession, do afterwards *make shipwreck of faith*; and this should guard us against presumption and self-confidence, and make us watchful and humble; but the Apostle assures us on this head, *they went out from us, but they were not of us, for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us,* 1 John ii. 19.* True it is, the

* The author would confirm his own sentiments by the following extract from Bishop Jewell's Exposition to the Thessalonians, fol. ed. 1611, p. 143, on 2 Thess. ii. 13.

"God hath chosen you from the beginning: his election is sure for ever. The Lord knoweth who are his. You shall not be deceived with the power and subtilty of Antichrist. You shall not fall from grace, you shall not perish. This is the comfort which abideth with the faithful, when they behold the fall of the wicked. When they see them forsake the truth, and delight in fables; when they see them return to their vomit, and wallow again in the mire; when we see these things in others, we must say, Alas! they are examples for me, and they are lamentable examples. Let him that standeth, take heed that he fall not. But God hath loved me, and hath chosen me to salvation. His mercy shall go before me, and his mercy shall follow me. His mercy shall guide my feet, and stay me from falling. If I stay by myself, I stay by nothing. I must needs come to the ground. Although all the world should be drowned with the waves of ungodliness, yet will I hold by the boat of his mercy, which shall safely preserve me. If all the world be set on fire with the flame of wickedness, yet will I creep into the bosom of the protection of my Lord, so shall no flame hurt me. He hath loved me, he hath chosen me, he will keep me. Neither the example nor the company of others, nor the enticing of the Devil, nor mine own sensual imaginations, nor sword, nor fire, is able to separate me from the love of God which is

sincere servant of God may fall into sin, in which case his transgressions will be punished with fatherly chastisements; yet the promise even in this case is, *Nevertheless, my loving-kindness will I not utterly take from him, nor suffer my faithfulness to fail; my covenant will I not break, nor alter the thing that is gone out of my lips*, Psalm lxxxix. 30—34.

Who that knows and believes such gracious declarations, can help admiring the infinite goodness and condescension of God, entering into such promises and engagements with his weak and sinful creatures! What heart but must be touched and melted with such wonderful love! O how can we hate sin enough, and love our God enough, after all that he hath done for us.

The new covenant eminently displays the glory of DIVINE GRACE. The great end to which it tends, is *the praise of the glory of his grace;* for this end vile and miserable sinners are chosen and called, justified and adopted, sanctified and glorified. Their whole salvation is of grace. Christ is a free gift; the Holy Spirit is a free gift; eternal life is a free gift. The dispositions, such as repentance, faith, and holiness, to which pardon and eternal life are promised, are free gifts. From the foundation of the spiritual building, Christ Jesus, to the top-stone, we must say, *Grace, grace unto it!* And that this may be the more illustriously manifested, even the very chief of sinners have been chosen, and even the very best of saints have, after conversion, fallen into most griev-

in Christ Jesus our Lord. This is the comfort of the faithful; so shall they wash their hands in the blood of the Lamb." He then shows how this security is seen and felt "through sanctification of the Spirit and faith of the truth. These are the tokens of God's election."

ous sins, and been recovered again from their backsliding. O how illustrious is that grace which selects from a ruined race, pardons, purifies, and, finally, for ever blesses a fallen, wretched, polluted creature, and gives to him holiness here, and eternal life hereafter! The 17th Article of our church, which contains the genuine doctrine, not only of our own church, but of the whole body of the Reformers, and of the pure church of Christ in all preceding ages, states this subject most scripturally, devotionally, and practically. The doctrine of our free salvation is indeed, to the awakened and enlightened mind, both humbling and consolatory, both holy and encouraging, filling the heart of man with love to God, and yet for ever shutting out all boasting, and giving all glory to his name, to whom alone all glory is for ever due.

Such is the blessed nature and character of the new covenant. We have farther to consider OUR DUTY WITH REFERENCE TO THIS GRACIOUS DISPENSATION; so that we may become interested in it, and partakers of its blessings. Every believer in Christ has a personal interest in the new covenant. We gain an interest in its blessings, when we seek them in the way of God's appointment. It is the divine invitation, *Incline your ear, and come unto me: hear, and your soul shall live, and I will make an everlasting covenant with you, even the sure mercies of David.—Seek ye the Lord while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near,* Isaiah lv. 3—7. Our duty then plainly is, earnestly to seek, and gratefully and believingly to accept, the offered salvation, to observe its ordinances, and to *adorn in all things the doctrine of God our Saviour.* If we are truly convinced of our lost condition, and

of our sinful character; if we are truly desirous of such a salvation as that which is exhibited to us in the gospel, God will freely grant to us the blessings of his grace, when we seek them in the name of Jesus Christ, and in a humble reliance on his atonement. The great Mediator will then plead our cause, and obtain for us whatever is needful for present or future happiness. The Father hath committed all things into the hands of Christ, (Matt. xxviii. 18; John v. 22; Eph. i. 22,) and when we come to him, and entrust our souls wholly to him, (2 Tim. i. 12.) he gives us the blessings of this covenant, even as if it had been made solely and individually for us.

Surely *we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip. For how shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation?* It is evidently just and right that those who refuse to receive and submit to so gracious a dispensation, should not have its blessings; that those who reject the remedy, should remain under the disease. We live now indeed under the full establishment of the new covenant, whether we accept it or not; but we are not partakers of its blessings, unless we are seeking for salvation, as guilty and helpless sinners, through Jesus Christ. Nay, if we reject, and persevere in our rejection, of this only way of salvation, we shall perish with aggravated guilt, and in a more tremendous ruin than those who never heard the grace of God.

Thus has God so ordered it, that none shall inherit eternal life, but in the way of repentance, faith and holiness; and yet none shall boast or glory in his sight. The future blessedness is so proposed and pro-

mised, that none can on safe grounds hope that they individually have an interest in it, but as they are partakers of these previous graces; and yet, these being his gifts, we are in all respects saved by grace. The interest of holiness, the glory of God, and the happiness of man, are all effectually secured. Faith, repentance and obedience, have often been considered as CONDITIONS of our salvation. This is true, if it be only meant that they ever accompany our obtaining eternal life. But the author avoids that mode of expression, it being apt to suggest ideas to the minds of the more ignorant, as if there were a real and proper MERIT in our works with reference to God: something to be done on our part, on the ground of which we might expect something to be done on God's part; or as if there were POWER in man of himself, unassisted by divine grace, to do that which is pleasing to God; both of which ideas are carefully to be guarded against, as directly opposing the plan of the gospel. Conditions thus required, tend also to puff up, or to depress unduly; to damp the freedom of a loving heart, and to make our service one of constraint and fear, rather than of voluntary and glad obedience. Are not the advantages of the term *condition* gained by representing good works as necessary EVIDENCES of a state of safety and grace, *as things that accompany salvation?* (Heb. vi. 9, 10,)* or, according to the scriptural expression, as *the fruits of the Spirit?* All those very

* Those who have supposed that the new covenant, as a covenant, necessarily implies conditions, do not seem to have duly considered the full signification and extended meaning of the original term, nor its use in places where no conditions are either named or supposable. Gen. ix. 9—17. Isaiah liv. 9, 10. Jer. xxxi. 31—34; xxxii. 37—41.

things which then be called conditions, are, in truth, part of the blessings promised in Christ, and freely bestowed through him.

GREAT COMFORT MAY BE DERIVED FROM THIS DISPENSATION. It is a satisfactory ground of HOPE for every good. That God should, before time began, have planned and fixed such a scheme of grace, and given his Son to effect it, and that it should have been ratified by such an amazing sacrifice, may well fill us with the most cheering hopes. If a man have a real knowledge of the holy character of God, he cannot but see that he is himself justly condemned and exposed to eternal ruin. To such a one, the way of salvation, by the only Redeemer, will be unspeakably precious. He will readily see and acknowledge that he can only be saved by a dispensation of free and sovereign grace and mercy. Here, and here only, is a sufficient foundation for all our hopes. Let us say, then, with David, *this is all my salvation.* 2 Sam. xxiii. 5. The expression is peculiarly strong—ALL my salvation. Many are disposed

Ezek. xvi. 60—63. Heb. viii. 8—12. See also Isaiah lv. 3. Luke i. 72—75.

The view above taken, does not by any means lessen our obligations to obedience. Our duties are as binding on us, as creatures of God, as if we had full power of ourselves to discharge them. Our helplessness and proneness to evil is the consequence of sin, and therefore a fault, and not a release from obedience. Nor let any man suppose that he may be negligent or careless; or must sit still and do nothing, till there be some extraordinary divine influence on his mind. The Apostle takes quite a different view, when he says, *Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God that worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure.* But if he be asked how we come to work at all, the Apostle shews us, *It is not of him that willeth, nor him that runneth; but of God that sheweth mercy.* And in another place, while he says, *I laboured more abundantly than they all,* he immediately adds, *Yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me.*

to trust partly in their works and partly in Christ; but let them learn to depend simply and exclusively, and entirely on the only Saviour, and to feel that without him they are wholly lost and undone; and in him, and with him, for ever blessed.

It is also an abundant source of most lively JOY. In the world Christians have tribulation. Besides the ordinary sorrows and distresses of life, and besides the afflictions of our families and connexions; the prevalence of sinful propensities, and the weakness of our faith, hope, and love, form a peculiar grief and burden to us as Christians: but notwithstanding all the heavy and distressing trials and afflictions to which we may be exposed, the dispensation of mercy in Christ Jesus may still fill us *with joy unspeakable and full of glory.* Observe the glowing terms by which it is introduced to us.—*How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace, that bringeth good tidings of good, that publisheth salvation; that saith unto Zion, thy God reigneth!* If God, the Sovereign Lord of all, be our friend, our joy, and our strength, if he be engaged to bless us, and we are hoping to be with him for ever, how can we sorrow *as those who have no hope?* The most important earthly events become insignificant and trifling, when we come to the borders of the grave. Then we need something solid and enduring to give us real satisfaction. We must have the word of God in our favour, and an interest in the covenant and promises of God to give us true joy. That can give joy, the highest joy, even in the prospect of death, judgment, and eternity. It has been the experience of thousands, and tens of thousands; and O that it may be

the experience of the writer, and of every reader of these pages, that with Jesus as our Shepherd, we may *pass through the valley of the shadow of death, and fear no evil.* What can so effectually remove the sting of death as to survey this new covenant, in all its fulness and certainty, as engaging God himself to pardon, justify, and save those that trust in him? While we can never boast in ourselves, nor our own doings, and can derive no hope from ourselves, we may yet, from this glorious dispensation, derive full and complete peace and joy. It shews us that we are complete in Christ Jesus, and that through his grace we may hope soon to be in that blessed region, where neither our own sins, nor the sins of others, shall any longer harass or distress us. In the prospect of this happy state of enjoyment, may we forget every sorrow, and may our hearts overflow with the most exalted joy?

It now only remains that we state why our Lord calls the cup in the Lord's Supper, *the New Testament in his blood.* He calls it so, not only as it is the emblem of that blood, which, as a sacrifice for our sins, obtained all the blessings of this new dispensation; but also as that dispensation was sanctioned by the blood of him who is Lord of all, ratified by the death of him who *was in the beginning with God, and was God.* The old dispensation was, as we have seen, (chap. i.) ratified by the blood of animals; but the greater magnitude, importance, and permanence of the Christian dispensation, may be discerned by the immensely greater value of the sacrifice which ratifies it. Where is a greater sacrifice to be found than that commemorated in the Lord's Supper? If Moses could refer Israel to the blood of animals, and

say, *Behold the blood of the covenant?* how much more may Jesus call our attention to the figure of his own blood, and say, *This is my blood of the new covenant; this is the new covenant in my blood?* Our Lord, in referring to the new covenant on this occasion, intimates, too, the speedy abrogation of the old: so that we may adopt the words of the apostle in referring to the expressions of Jeremiah, *In that he saith, a new covenant, he hath made the first old: now that which decayeth and waxeth old, is ready to vanish away.* Our Lord, also, in mentioning his blood in connexion with this new covenant, points out to our special attention that blood as the only ransom price of our redemption, the only meritorious cause of our salvation, and the perfect ratification of every blessing of the Gospel. He seems, too, to intimate that while he thus obtained an infinitely gracious dispensation, it was an adequate motive for every suffering, and a compensation for all his woe. He saw *of the travail of his soul and was satisfied.* Whenever, therefore, we receive the Lord's Supper, we are visibly and sensibly taught and reminded, what a gracious plan of salvation there is, how it was obtained for us, and ratified to us; and we are called by fresh acts of faith in Christ, to claim a renewed interest in it.

CHAPTER V.

THE DESIGN OF THE LORD'S SUPPER.

THE words of Scripture have hitherto been our guide in the statement of the doctrines connected with the Lord's Supper, and they furnish us with ample information as to its main design.* We have seen that

* This may be a suitable place to give a brief explanation of the NAMES applied to this institution.

SACRAMENT is a name given to it in common with Baptism. It is not a scriptural name, and it has been variously explained. Some derive it from "Sacramentum Militaire," the military oath of fidelity among the Romans, and so consider it as representing our solemn dedication of ourselves to be faithful soldiers of Christ. Others, from the circumstance of the most ancient translators of the Bible into Latin, usually rendering μυστηριον, *mystery*, by the word, "Sacramentum," think that it was adopted, in the early ages of the church, as an appropriate name for those ordinances in which there is a deep and hidden meaning veiled under a sign or figure. Augustine considers the word Sacrament as equivalent to a HOLY SIGN. He says, (see City of God, Book x. Chap. v.) "an external offering is a visible sacrament of an invisible sacrifice, that is, a holy sign." This is probably the true definition. The Church of England explains the meaning to be, "an outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace, given unto us, ordained by Christ himself, as a means whereby we receive the same, and a pledge to assure us thereof;" thus bringing it before us as a divinely appointed means of grace, whereby we receive an increase of grace, and a token of divine favour.

The BREAKING OF BREAD seems to have been the first and the scriptural name of this institution, taken from the principal outward action of this ordinance. See Acts ii. 42, 46; xx. 7.

The term COMMUNION was doubtless derived from St. Paul's account of this ordinance. 1 Cor. x. 16. It is descriptive of the fellowship which we then have with Christ, and with our Christian brethren.

The LORD'S SUPPER is (as is generally supposed) a name given to this institution by the apostle. 1 Cor. xi. 20. Being appointed by our Lord immediately after his last supper, and for his own more direct

the words of the appointment decidedly express the doctrine of our Saviour's atonement, and point out the ratification of the new covenant in his blood. The design of this institution, as it respects our practical conduct, will be more evident from the consideration of the expression of our Lord, *This do in remembrance of me;* and that of his apostle,—*as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do show forth the Lord's death till he come.*

honour, it is so called with great propriety. It has the authority of Christ for its observance, and it brings before us the atonement of Christ as the chief nourishment of our souls. Some have supposed that the apostle alluded to the ancient love feasts, or to them and the communion, under the term Lord's Supper; but this is not very likely.

EUCHARIST, that is *thanksgiving*. This is one of the most ancient names given to the Lord' Supper, apparently from the circumstance of our Lord giving thanks at the time of its institution. Chrysostom, in a Homily on the 8th of Matthew, says, "The dreadful mysteries, full of salvation, which we celebrate, in every assembly, are called the Eucharist, because they are a commemoration of many benefits, and show forth the principal price of divine providence, and dispose us always to give him thanks."

OBLATION, SACRIFICE, and MEMORIAL, were names anciently given to this institution, not in the Roman Catholic sense, as has been fully proved by Protestant writers, but as being a spiritual sacrifice of prayer and praise, or as representing the great sacrifice on the cross.

It is often called the CHRISTIAN FEAST; perhaps in allusion to 1 Cor. v. 8. The soul of the believer has that satisfaction, refreshment, and nourishment in the atonement of Christ, here exhibited, which the hungry person has in his food. Some have considered it as similar in its nature to the ancient feasts upon a sacrifice; and that as they were of old accustomed to partake of the victim in order to gain the benefit of the sacrifice, so we partake of the emblems of our great sacrifice, to show our hope in him; but on this, see Note, chapter i.

It is sometimes called THE SEAL OF THE COVENANT; but this is not a scriptural, and it does not appear to the author that it is a proper epithet. The idea is taken from Abraham's circumcision being a *seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had yet being uncircumcised;* (Rom. iv. 11.) but this by no means implies that the Lord's Supper may justly be called a seal of the covenant. In fact an unsealed covenant is of no validity. The new covenant was ratified and confirmed by the blood of Christ. As far as it relates to the confirmation of our own faith, it may be said, as Calvin remarks, to be renewed, or rather continued, whenever that sacred cup is presented to us.

The cross of Christ is the glory of the Christian religion. It is the bright centre in which all the rays of spiritual light unite, and from which they proceed. It is so stupendous a fact in itself, that the Creator of all worlds, the great Jehovah, in the person of his Son, should take our nature upon him to expiate the guilt of our sins, that it may well have our constant meditation. Such tremendous sufferings, and such never-ending sorrows, are averted by the completion of this grand system; and such incalculable, boundless, and eternal joys, are obtained by this sacrifice of himself, that we shall through eternity, regard with unspeakable joy this wonderful grace of God in Christ Jesus.

The Lord's Supper is a solemn ordinance, designed for a perpetual exhibition and commemoration of the atoning sacrifice of the death of Christ, and for our participation in the blessings of that sacrifice. It is a representation to the outward senses of this great truth, that the only Son of God became man, and died for our sins. It teaches us by signs and emblems, those doctrines which the preaching of the gospel brings before us expressly in words; and being a divine institution it is not a bare lesson to the senses, but an effectual means of grace to the soul. Herein Christ offers himself to us with all his benefits, and we receive him by faith.

Its great design is to represent, or place before us, to commemorate, and to shew forth the death of Christ as a sacrifice for sin, and to declare our expectation of his coming again; and the actual benefit which the faithful receive is the communion of the body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ.

It is A REPRESENTATION, OR PLACING BEFORE US

OF THE LORD'S DEATH, AS A SACRIFICE FOR SIN. This we have already shewn in former chapters—but let us dwell more particularly on the design of this representation.

Dr. Owen, in his Treatise on the Lord's Supper, says in substance as follows:

'This sacrament is a more special and particular representation and setting forth of Christ as our Redeemer, than either the written or preached word. God has appointed him to be *evidently crucified before our eyes*, that every poor soul that is stung with sin, and ready to die by sin, should look up to him and be healed. John iii. 14, 15. Isaiah liii. 5. Let faith represent Christ to our souls as here exhibited of God and given unto us, as tendered to us and received by us, and incorporated with us. Let us not rest in the outward elements and the visible sign. Christ in his love; Christ in his blood-shedding, agony, and prayer; Christ in his death, is here proposed before us, even by him who has appointed the institution. It is a way of proposal full of tenderness and love. To every communicant there is, by the grace and faithfulness of God, and through his ministers, a tender of Jesus Christ in his death and all his benefits. The main question is, whether you will stir up your hearts to a new and fresh receiving of Jesus Christ, who is thus proposed and tendered to you by the love of your heavenly Father.'

This is a very refreshing view of the Lord's Supper. The promises and proposals which Almighty God makes to you by his word are more general, and have not that sensible and particular application to the individual, which is made by this affecting and

tender mode of proposing the blessings of the gospel. When the minister says to you individually, *Take, eat;* and gives you individually the bread and the wine, how delightful is the thought, that the blessings of salvation by Jesus Christ are graciously tendered to you! O let us stir up our hearts gladly to receive them!

The Lord's Supper is designed to COMMEMORATE CHRIST CRUCIFIED.* To commemorate is to preserve the memory of any thing by some public act. We find that God frequently appointed memorials of past transactions of magnitude, to declare to future generations his glorious works. Thus circumcision was appointed as a memorial of the covenant with Abraham; the stones taken out of Jordan were appointed as a memorial of Israel's passing across that river on dry land; the passover, (in addition to its typical design,) was appointed as a memorial, a perpetually-repeated memorial, of the deliverance of the Jews from Egypt. We should, if left to ourselves, soon forget our beneficent Deliverer, and the pride of our hearts is ever tending to lead us to rely on ourselves, rather than simply rest on his promises of salvation; and hence the need of this memorial. The connection of the precept in which we are required to do this *in remembrance of Christ*, shews that we are called on chiefly to remember his death and sufferings. Let us not remember, then, transiently and slightly, but deeply, seriously, and constantly.

* The word *αναμνησις*, used by our Lord, conveys the ideas of commemoration and memorial, as well as remembrance. It may be noticed as a marked distinction between the two covenants, that under the law of Moses there was a commemoration of sins. Heb. x. 3.—While under the gospel there is a commemoration of a Saviour from sin.

Let us recollect at the same time his original dignity and glory, his wonderful humiliation and abasement, his extreme sufferings and painful death, his resurrection, ascension, and consequent glory.

We may at all times with advantage remember Jesus Christ as a MARTYR, witnessing a good confession before Pontius Pilate, (1 Tim. vi. 13,) and sealing it with his blood—as an EXAMPLE of suffering obedience even unto death, (1 Peter ii. 21,) as a CONQUEROR, even in death triumphing over all his enemies; but it is particularly as A SACRIFICE FOR SIN, that we should regard his death when we surround his table.

Let not your minds be turned from this one point, but remember that Jesus Christ died for your sins, and keep in view the benefits thereby procured for you. It was remarked by a much-valued friend, (the late Rev. W. Richardson, of York,) that many sincere worshippers deprive themselves of much of that comfort and strength which they might have received at the Lord's table, by not having a single eye to the great object designed by that ordinance. Instead of keeping their minds steadily fixed upon Jesus Christ, as the Lamb that was slain, and dwelling on his sacrifice, and the efficacy of his blood, they have by turns meditated on a variety of other religious truths. They have endeavoured, for instance, to take a comprehensive view of the offices of Christ, and the various doctrines of his gospel. This, though not so common a digression as vain and worldly thoughts, and not in itself a blameable one, may yet prevent our deriving that special benefit to be looked for in this sacrament, "the strengthening and refreshing of our souls by the body and blood

of Christ," if it lead us from fixing our main thoughts on his death for our sins. Those who wish to be comforted by this ordinance, should determine, while engaged in it, *to know nothing*, and to think of nothing comparatively, save *Jesus Christ and him crucified*, and what is directly connected with that cheering and leading truth of the gospel. It is here taken for granted that such know the evil of sin; wish earnestly to be healed of their spiritual maladies; and stedfastly purpose to lead a new life, for no other guests are invited to the Lord's table. But, on this supposition, no sense of unworthiness, none of the suspicions inseparable from conscious guilt, no respect to other religious doctrines, or topics, which in their season ought to engage our attention, should draw away our main thoughts from this capital truth of the gospel. Nor shall we, if thus steadily and singly looking to the dying Saviour, depart from his table without some degree of strength and refreshment. It has been well observed, 'There are seasons in the Christian's life in which the name of Jesus comes to his heart like a live coal from the altar, and brings with it a warmth, a feeling, and a joy, which angels might come down from heaven to share.' *

While the Lord's Supper commemorates, it also *shews forth, the death of Christ.* 1 Cor. xi. 26.

There is a precept respecting the observance of the passover which will illustrate this subject. *It shall come to pass, when your children shall say unto you, What mean you by this service? that ye shall say, It is the Lord's passover, who passed over the houses of the*

* See Bradley's Sermons.

children of Israel in Egypt, when he smote the Egyptians and delivered our houses. Exodus xii. 26, 27. Similar to this is the shewing, the declaring, and openly publishing the Lord's death at his table.

But what do you shew forth or declare? We declare the FACT OF HIS DEATH. It has been observed, that when a fact is such that men's outward senses can judge of it; when it is performed publicly in the presence of witnesses; when there are public institutions kept up in memory of it; and such institutions commence, and are established at the time when the fact took place, it becomes a decisive and incontrovertible evidence of the truth of the fact. It is impossible that such an event did not take place. In this view, then, the continual commemoration of the death of Christ, is from age to age, a plain, manifest, and satisfactory evidence of his death to all mankind, and that death a sacrifice for sin. It is a standing proof of that great fact which is the foundation of all our hopes.

We declare THE MANNER OF HIS DEATH. That though perfectly innocent, and the only-begotten and the beloved Son of God, his bodily and mental sufferings were most painful and severe. The breaking of the bread declares his body broken—the pouring out of the wine his blood shed. And in how many ways was that body broken! Mark his anguish and passion in Gethsemane; his being smitten, spitted on, mocked, and buffeted in the hall of judgment! His enemies put a crown of thorns on his head, and they smite them into his temples. After they have scourged him, the devoted victim is compelled to bear his own cross, till he sinks under the load. At length the iron nails were driven

through the tender nerves, and he was suspended on the accursed tree.* Every part of his holy body was bruised and wounded. After lingering several hours in this agony, and receiving gall and vinegar in derision, he expired, amid the bitter taunts and revilings of those he came to save, and bearing the heavy wrath of Him in whose bosom he had for ever dwelt. And even after his death, *one of the soldiers*, in wanton indignity and derision, *with a spear pierced his side, and forthwith came thereout blood and water.*

We here declare THE TRUE CAUSE OF HIS DEATH. If Jesus Christ had deserved to suffer; if like other men, he had himself sinned; then there would have been no cause thus to celebrate his death. But *he was wounded for our transgressions.* "In the ordinary course of justice," says Bishop Andrewes, "when a party is put to death, we say, and say truly, that the executioner cannot be said to be the cause of his

* Crucifixion was a most painful and ignominious mode of executing criminals. It was a Roman punishment, and only inflicted on slaves. The cross was made of two beams placed across, sometimes nearly in the form of a T, and sometimes in that of an X. Our Saviour's cross is said to have been of the former kind. This mode of death, as it was in the highest degree excruciating, so it was generally very lingering. First, the criminal was severely scourged. Next, he bore his cross, or part of it, to the place of execution. When he came thither, his clothes were entirely stripped off, and either before or after the cross was erected, his hands were sometimes bound, but ordinarily nailed to the cross-beam, and his feet to the lower part. Large nails, rude and cruel instruments of torture, were thus forcibly driven through the most sensitive parts of the body; and as they sustained part, if not the whole weight of the body, the pain must have been peculiarly exquisite. Thus the criminal hung, till hunger, thirst, and acute pain, dismissed him from intolerable suffering. Thus, Christian reader, for our redemption, naked, despised, agonising with pain, and exposed to the most cruel mockings, hung for several hours the innocent and holy Jesus, the Creator and the Saviour of the world.

death, nor the sheriff by whose commandment he does it, nor yet the judge by whose sentence, nor the jury by whose verdict, nor the law itself by whose authority it proceeded. Sin, and sin only, is the murderer. In a certain sense it is so here. It was the sin of our polluted hands that pierced his hands; the swiftness of our feet to do evil, that nailed his feet to the tree; the wicked devices of our head that gored his head; and the wretched devices of our heart that pierced his heart; our sinfulness caused his death, and his death takes away our sin." As far as it regards man, sin was the cause of Christ's death. But, O how wonderful was the divine mercy, that God, in his abounding love, took occasion from the sinfulness of man, to display the glories of his own holiness and justice, and the riches of his own grace. In this view, we may trace yet higher the purpose of Christ's death, and see it originating before time began, in the everlasting counsels of Jehovah, 2 Tim. i. 9. The Saviour had no sin, nor could any created arm have put him to death; God the Father it was, that *spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all*, Rom. viii. 32. That his law might remain inviolable, that his justice might be for ever unsullied, and yet sinful man be for ever blessed, *it pleased the Lord to bruise him; he hath put him to grief.* It has been observed, the very sufferings which, so far as we are concerned, were the effect of our crimes, were, by the mysterious counsel of God, the expiation of them: Christ was weary, that we might rest; he hungered, that we might eat the bread of life; and thirsted, that we might drink the water of life. He grieved, that we might rejoice; and became miserable, to make us happy. He was

apprehended, that we might escape; accursed, that we might be acquitted; and condemned, that we might be absolved. He died, that we might live; and was crucified by men, that we might be justified before God.

Thus the Lord's Supper was designed to represent, commemorate, and show forth the Lord's death as a sacrifice for sin. This is done for our own edification, as a testimony to the world, and as a prevailing mode of pleading his merits before God. It has been observed, that, "what we more compendiously express in that general conclusion of our prayers, "*through Jesus Christ our Lord*," we more fully and forcibly represent in the celebration of the Holy Eucharist, wherein we plead the virtue and merits of the same sacrifice here, that our great High Priest is continually urging for us in heaven."*

Whenever, then, Christian reader, you celebrate this ordinance, we exhort you in the expressive words of a late writer, "Look up to the offering of Jesus Christ once for all: look to him as dying for the remission of your sins, washing them away in his precious blood; suffering that you might be saved. And while you are kneeling under his cross, touched with the utmost possible sense of God's love, who

* "Receiving the Lord's Supper, is," as Mr. Scott has remarked, "making a profession of those things in which genuine Christianity consists. It is saying, I believe that I am that lost sinner who must have perished if Christ had not come to save the lost: I believe him to be the Son of God; and that his blood, shed in immense love to lost sinners, is an all-sufficient atonement. In this persuasion I repent of all sin, renounce all other confidence, receive Christ as my Saviour, 'feed on him in my heart by faith and thanksgiving,' yield myself to his service, and join myself to his people; and in avowing this at the Lord's table, I avow that I put no trust in that act of obedience, but offer it as a sacrifice of thanksgiving, acceptable only through his sacrifice of atonement as signified by it." See Scott's Letters, p. 293.

gave his only begotten Son, and affected with sentiments of the most tender devotion to him who gave himself for you; embrace also with your good will all mankind, whom he loved for his sake. Then rise up, by his grace, to the sober, continual practice of every thing that is good, and excellent, and praiseworthy, and conformable to such sentiments and affections, and the obligations laid on you by his infinite love,"

The observance of the Lord's Supper contains also a virtual DECLARATION OF OUR EXPECTATION OF HIS COMING AGAIN. We show forth the Lord's death, *till he come* as the Judge of all men. 1 Cor. iv. 5; xi. 26.

By this ordinance we acknowledge that Jesus Christ will come to JUDGE THE WORLD. We show that we believe that a solemn day is approaching, when *God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good or evil*—that all mankind shall then be divided into two classes, and only two, the righteous and the wicked—the future inhabitants of heaven and of hell—of everlasting punishment, and everlasting life. Partaking of the Lord's Supper is an implied and public avowal of this expectation. How important is this avowal! How well calculated to restrain evil, and encourage righteousness? How suited to fill us with a holy reverence of God, and a just fear of displeasing him!

But while this view inspires reverence, there is another consideration which should fill the servants of God with the liveliest hope and joy. He comes also as THE SAVIOUR OF HIS PEOPLE. Heb. ix. 28.

Had we no farther view than to remember and declare our Saviour's death, this ordinance would be full of comfort; but since we have not only to look

back on what Christ has done, but forward to what he will do, new beams of light and joy are shed around this blessed institution. It leads us to look up to Jesus as a living Redeemer, gone to prepare places for us in the mansions of his Father's house, (John xiv. 2, 3.) and to comfort each other with the animating hope that, notwithstanding all the dangers, trials, and sorrows of our present state, we shall soon be admitted into his presence, and then *we shall ever be with the Lord.* In receiving the Lord's Supper, we declare our hope that Christ will hereafter appear for us as our Deliverer; that however now we may be groaning under the burden of many sins, contending with our spiritual enemies, and often worsted in the contest; yet then he will have purified our souls, and will *present us faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy.* We declare our hope that however the Christian may now be afflicted and despised, his wisdom will one day be universally acknowledged; the justice of God perfectly cleared; and his servants be openly owned by him, and for ever blessed with him.

When this happy day arrives, then, and not till then, will the observance of this solemn ordinance cease to be a duty. "Then his people will no longer need such memorials as these; for they will incessantly enjoy the brightest vision of his person, and the richest fruits of his death."

CHAPTER VI.

THE OBLIGATION TO RECEIVE THE LORD'S SUPPER.

WHEN we consider the very small proportion of the congregation assembling for public worship, which usually remains to partake of this ordinance, it cannot be deemed unnecessary to insist on the obligation which lies on the truly pious not to neglect it. Even in more religious congregations, where the ministry is most efficient, it has been calculated that rarely anything like one fourth stay to partake of the Lord's Supper; and the proportion is, in general, much less.

The primitive Christians did not thus turn away from the Lord's table: the churches communicated every Lord's day, and it was the practice for ALL, both clergy, and laity, to receive.*

What a blessing would it be to the church, could it be again said of Christians, *They continued daily*

* See Bingham's Christian Antiquities, fol. vol. i. p. 824—826, and Acts xx. 7. Some have thought from the statement, '*they continued steadfastly in the Apostle's doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread and prayers,*' (Acts ii. 42.) and from the expression '*coming together to eat,*' &c. (1 Cor. xi. 20, 33.) that the primitive Christians received the Lord's Supper whenever they assembled together for public worship.

with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart; praising God, and having favour with all the people.

Observe the reasons which should induce sincere Christians to attend to this institution.

THE EXPRESS COMMAND OF OUR SAVIOUR.—*This do in remembrance of me.* Luke xxii. 19. 1 Cor. xi. 24, 25. Here we have a plain and positive precept.* It is so express that it cannot easily be mistaken. It has been objected, that such a rite is inconsistent with the spirituality of the gospel, and has no moral foundation; but the very circumstance that the command rests on the ground of positive institution, and not of natural duty, makes the observance of it a direct acknowledgment of the authority of Christ, and the neglect of it a disregard of HIS precept. Hence, as Dr. Owen says, "Faith and obedience here give special honour to Christ as our Sovereign. It is, in fact, the most direct profession of the subjection of our souls and consciences to the authority of Christ in all our religion. Our reason for it is, Christ would have it so." There is no uncertainty in the direction; it is not conveyed in dark and obscure terms,

* In answer to this it has been said, that the washing of feet might with equal propriety be now enjoined as a religious obligation on Christians, from the words of our Saviour, "Ye ought also to wash one another's feet, for I have given you an example that ye should do as I have done to you." John xiii. 12—15. But, (1) there are no traces in other parts of the word of God, or in the history of the Church, that washing of feet was observed as a religious ordinance among the first Christians. (2) This is an unsuitable service for all countries. It was an act of kindness and humility, and very refreshing in a warm country; but it would be an act of unkindness, and very troublesome and unpleasant, in a cold one. A practical lesson of humility was obviously the great design of our Lord in that instruction.

—THIS DO. The command is easy. No burdensome and costly sacrifices are required, no long and tedious rites and ceremonies are to be gone through. You cannot say it was designed for the twelve Apostles, or for the Jewish nation only; for the motive applies to all with increasing strength as time rolls on, and the practice of the primitive Gentile church contradicts such an interpretation. It is also against the express revelation made to the great Apostle of the Gentile church, for the instruction of the Gentiles. He begins his account of this ordinance, by saying, *I have received of the Lord that which I also delivered to you.* 1 Cor. xi. 23. The command being positive, love to our Saviour constrains us to obedience. *If ye love me, keep my commandments*, applies to every direction of Christ; but with peculiar force to one given at the point of death, and directly concerning his own honour. The command being positive, the matter comes, where this ordinance is neglected, to this sad issue, "either Christ is not your Lord, or you are not his disciples; for a Lord without obedience! a disciple without obligation! how manifest the absurdity, how evident the inconsistency!"

2. THE MOTIVE ASSIGNED FOR OBEDIENCE. It is peculiarly touching and affecting—*in remembrance of Christ.* In fulfilling a plain precept, you also give a required evidence of affectionate recollection of a Saviour's death. A grateful heart longs for occasions of testifying its attachment, and gladly avails itself of any opportunity of shewing love to a gracious benefactor. To whom are you so much indebted as you are to Christ? In what instance can you possibly have equally strong reasons to shew gratitude and affection?

3. THE UNIVERSAL PRACTICE OF THE CHURCH in the primitive ages strengthens this view of the duty. The whole scope of the Apostle's reasoning with the Corinthians, (1 Cor. x 16—21; xi. 20—34,) shews that the first Christians were in the frequent habit of eating this bread and drinking this wine. The mode of expression, (Acts xx. 7.) "*upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached unto them*, naturally leads us to conclude that it was the practice of the church at Troas to communicate weekly. In fact, it is known * that it was in the primitive times received weekly, and in some cases oftener. Now if they, some of whom had seen our Lord die, and all of whom had the ardent

* See Bingham's Christian Antiquities, book xv. chap. ix.

Justin Martyr has given us, in an apology for the Christians, written only 140 years after Christ, an account of the mode of celebrating the Lord's Supper in his time. I subjoin what he says, as being calculated not only to shew the practice of the church, but to prove that the peculiarities of the Roman Catholic Mass were then unknown.

Describing the rites of the first Communion after Baptism, he says, after prayers, "bread and a cup of wine and water are brought to the President or Bishop, which he takes, and offers up praise and glory to the Father of all things, through the name of his Son, and the Holy Spirit; and this thanksgiving to God for vouchsafing us worthy of these his creatures, is a prayer of more than ordinary length. When the Bishop has finished the prayers and the thanksgiving service, all the people present conclude with an audible voice, saying, Amen; now *Amen*, in the Hebrew tongue is, *so be it*. The Eucharistical office being thus performed by the Bishop, and concluded with the acclamations of all the people, those we call Deacons, distribute to every one present to partake of Eucharistical bread, and wine and water, and then they carry it to the absent."

"This food we call the Eucharist, of which none are allowed to be partakers, but such only as are true believers, and have been baptized in the laver of regeneration for the remission of sins, and live according to Christ's precepts; for we do not take this as common bread and common wine. But as Jesus Christ our Saviour was made flesh by the word of God, and had real flesh and blood for our salvation, so we are taught that this food, which the very same word blessed by prayer

attachment of primitive Christianity to their Lord, felt it needful and advantageous thus frequently to celebrate the memorials of his dying love, how much more should we, who live at so much greater a distance of time, and at a period when *the love of so many has waxed cold!* This being an Institution, appointed by Jesus Christ, the Founder of a spiritual church, and who gave his disciples his complete design when he established that church, it was not like many of the ordinances of the Jewish state, merely supported by carnal reason, or suited to their national condition, or continued for a season, on account of their prejudices. It is evidently and eminently fitted to promote our spiritual improvement, and commanded in a manner which leaves us no reason to suppose that it was ever intended to be set aside, or abrogated, as the church got more light and experience, but rather designed as a standing ordinance.

4. THE STATEMENT OF ST. PAUL PROVES THAT THE OBLIGATION IS STILL BINDING ON CHRISTIANS. *As often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come.* 1 Cor. xi. 26. While the expression implies that the Corinthians were in the frequent practice of partaking of the Lord's Supper, it shews that it is the duty of the church to cele-

and thanksgiving, is turned into the nourishment and substance of our flesh and blood, and is in some sense the flesh and blood of the incarnate Jesus." After quoting the account of the institution from the Gospel, and adding a remark respecting the mysteries of Mithra, he proceeds, "after this sacrament is over, we remind each other of the obligations to his duty, and the rich relieve the poor, and upon such charitable accounts we visit some or other every day." His description of Christian worship on the Sunday, leads us to conclude that the Lord's Supper ever formed a part of public worship on that day. See Reeve's Apologies of the Fathers, p. 115—126.

brate it, till our Lord comes to judge the world. It is surely an insufficient answer to this passage to say, that the coming of Christ here intended is his spiritual coming, or the indwelling of the Holy Spirit in true believers: for he had undoubtedly come in this manner to many of the Corinthians, and yet they were in the habit of partaking of the outward ordinance, and the Apostle directed them to continue the practice.

Hence we conclude, then, that the respectable, and in many respects exemplary body of Christians, who from motives of conscience lay aside the outward observance of this Sacrament, are not borne out by scriptural authority, or primitive practice. But let us not judge or condemn them: but rather remember of each one, *to his own Master he standeth or falleth.* But our reasoning applies with peculiar force to those who have no such scruples, and yet usually abstain from the Lord's table. It leaves them without excuse.

The FREQUENCY with which we shall discharge this duty is indeed here left, as in various other cases, to our own conscience. Thus it becomes a trial of the state of our mind towards our Redeemer, a test of our affectionate remembrance of him, and an evidence of the warmth of our love to him. Judging by this test, is not, Christian reader, the true state of the church, even in favoured England, lamentably low? It may be said generally, that if your heart be right with God, you will permit no opportunity that occurs in the place where you worship, to pass by without enjoying this blessing. Thomas, when once absent from the disciples, lost the cheering sight of his Saviour, which they enjoyed.

Yet the frequency of the communion should not perhaps be such as may tend to prevent preparation, or the impression which such a solemnity, has, when received at occasional intervals. It appears very desirable that it should be administered and received once a month, and on the great festivals of our church. Nor need we fear that such a frequent reception will so abate our reverence in attending as to hinder our profit. The daily practice of prayer and reading the Scriptures has not such an effect. It is observable that the Epistle which gives particular cautions against formality, gives the direction, *not forsaking the assembling of yourselves together.* Heb. x. 25. Some pious ministers have found monthly communion to be more adapted to the present circumstances of the church, than its more frequent administration.

Supposing the obligation to receive it be plainly proved, and fully admitted, consider farther, that to NEGLECT it, is attended with aggravated guilt and danger.

It is WILFUL AND REPEATED DISOBEDIENCE TO YOUR SAVIOUR. He directs you, and his ministers invite you, to frequent his table. They say again and again, *Come: for all things are now ready.* But if you are living in the neglect of this ordinance, you greatly resemble those who first rejected the Gospel. They *with one consent began to make excuse;* and you know that it was said of them, *none of those men which were bidden shall taste of my supper.* The soul was to be cut off, and the man was to bear his sin, that neglected to eat the passover. Numb. ix. 13. Have you not reason to fear that a neglect of the Lord's Supper will be attended with a similar danger?

It is SEPARATING FROM YOUR CHRISTIAN BRETHREN.

You thus break off communion with your fellow-Christians. By such conduct you declare that you wish not to be numbered with the true disciples of Jesus Christ, but would rather have your lot with those who neglect him.

It is A VIRTUAL UNDERVALUING OF YOUR BAPTISM. That was a sign of your admission into the Christian church. The Lord's Supper is the sign of your continuance in it. By neglecting it, you appear to count your baptism a privilege not worth maintaining. This is also done when you come to years of discretion and it is your own voluntary act, even after, through the piety of your parents, you have been baptized. Is it not manifest, that if it had been left to your own choice, you would not have been baptized? Do not go thus far to renounce Christianity. It was a great sin to withdraw from professing it, in times of difficulty and persecution, (Heb. x. 26—31.) when it might seem to admit of some extenuation from the frailty of man, and the fear of such dreadful sufferings as the primitive martyrs underwent; but "by neglecting the Lord's Supper, (the peculiar rite of Christians,) do you not in effect deny the profession that you may have made of Christianity, and deny it, remember, in times of liberty and encouragement?"

It is PUTTING A SLIGHT ON YOUR SAVIOUR'S DEATH. The Lord's Supper is the memorial of his Sacrifice. When you refuse to come, you do in effect declare, I will remember my worldly friends, my pleasures, my private pursuits, or other engagements; but I will not remember my Redeemer in the greatest instance of his love. I will not confess my dying Lord; I will not honour his name; I will not declare

my hope in his cross. I wish to have no concern in his atonement and salvation. Christian reader, can you bear the implications which attach to this neglect? Did Jesus die for you, and will you not obey one of his last, one of his most easy, one of his most delightful precepts! The point is gained. Your heart yields. You will mourn over your past ingratitude, and determine to embrace every opportunity of remembering and publicly confessing a crucified Saviour. You see that not to do so, is in fact to renounce communion with Christ, and to say, "I can spend my time with ease and pleasure, in the scenes of idleness and trifling; but I care not to be with Christ and love not communion with him."

It is INCURRING THE AWFUL DANGER of partaking of the judgments which he will inflict on the ungodly at his return. The passover was the pledge of Israel's safety! and the Lord's Supper, to the true receiver, is the pledge of his safety from a worse destruction than that of the first-born in Egypt.

But the YOUNG may be especially addressed on this subject. The Jews, it would appear, (Luke ii. 41, 42.) took their children at twelve years of age, to partake of the passover; and well would it be if Christian youth, at twelve or fourteen, under right impressions, and with intelligence and piety, began to partake of the Lord's Supper. When this season is neglected, life passes silently forward, habits of omission get formed, and diffidence and false shame strengthen them. It has been observed, "we naturally feel some degree of embarrassment in doing any thing, for the first time, that is attended with a considerable degree of interest, and public solemnity." This difficulty increases with increasing years. I trust

that those of my younger readers, whose hearts are renewed by divine grace, will therefore feel that now is the happy opportunity, now is the precise time, in which they should commence a practice which will soon become a blessed habit, bringing along with it a most important train of consequences, full of benefit to them all their days. It is a turning point of your life. Come to this table, and you are taking a most important step towards fixing you for a holy, useful, and happy life. Turn from it, and you are multiplying the difficulties which the world, the flesh, and the devil, ever present in the way to heaven. *The kindness of our youth*, (Jer. ii. 2.) is much remembered by our heavenly Father. Give, then, to Christ, the first and the best of your days.

Yet while we would invite you and all Christians, and require you in the name of your Saviour, not to neglect his plain command, we would press you also to *examine yourselves whether ye be in the faith:* if you are still living in a course of sin, come not here; but yet keep not away altogether; repent of your sins, believe in Christ, devote yourselves to him, and then come, and you will obtain both edification and comfort.

In this chapter we have only considered the obligations in the way of duty; the privilege must be reserved for farther notice. Let us feel with Bishop Taylor, "Happy is that soul that comes to these springs of salvation, as the hart to the water-brooks, panting and thirsting, weary of sin, and hating vanity, and reaching out the heart and hands to Christ."

CHAPTER VII.

ANSWERS TO THE EXCUSES COMMONLY MADE FOR NOT COMING TO THE LORD'S SUPPER.

THE obligation will be still farther felt, if we consider the excuses by which scrupulous or unwilling minds commonly justify their absence.

That which is most frequently urged, and which has perhaps the greatest weight, is this—they that receive unworthily incur great guilt; WE ARE UNWORTHY, AND THEREFORE WE DARE NOT GO. This excuse, seeming to imply a reverence to this institution, makes many easy, under a direct act of disobedience; yet, in fact, it arises from ignorance and unbelief.

It arises from IGNORANCE; for many persons do not make the evident distinction between being UNWORTHY and receiving UNWORTHILY. The very best are unworthy. The guilty and the sinful are the very persons invited to come. A sense of our sinfulness is a needful part of preparation. If indeed a poor man resist, or cast from him, the bounty of the benevolent, he is unworthy of relief. If a sick man reject the medicine which would heal him, he is unworthy of health; but you see evidently that the

poverty of the one is the very reason why he should take the offered relief; the sickness of the other is the most powerful motive to welcome and receive the physician's prescription. If, then, you are sensible of your unworthiness, and desire pardon and grace, you should ask them, not because you are worthy, but because you need these blessings, and must perish without them. You not only want them, but Jesus Christ invites YOU to come and receive supplies adapted to your necessities. If you are afraid of receiving UNWORTHILY, you will find in a subsequent chapter some information and directions which may remove this fear.

But is there not much UNBELIEF and presumption in staying away? You think, perhaps, that by going you are presuming. No: it is not presumption to accept our Lord's invitation, and fulfil his command. For why was the precept given, if it were presumptuous to obey it? Take care lest you be found impugning the wisdom of the great Legislator. The presumption is in refusing to come, and not in obeying the precept. Our turning away from the Lord's table does not prove our humility, but our forgetfulness of Christ's request. Is there not reason to fear that it arises not "from a tender conscience, but from a cold, careless, worldly heart." Burkitt well observes, that "the reverence which our Saviour expects to this holy institution, is a reverence of obedience." Some that object to receive on account of unworthiness, do, as it has been remarked, "venture at some great solemnities, as Easter, to approach this table; which makes it wonderful how they can reconcile their notion of unworthiness with their practice of receiving at such seasons; or else they must

have at those seasons a better opinion of themselves than is consistent with Christian humility." But beware of unbelieving thoughts of your heavenly Father's love; entertain not hard thoughts of the compassionate Saviour of men. They are highly dishonourable to his character, his word, and his promises, and are very prejudicial to yourselves. The Lord's Supper was never designed to be a snare to human frailty. Remember, that you are not coming to *Mount Sinai*, burning with fire, and covered with blackness, with bounds fixed to keep off the people; but rather to *Mount Sion, to Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant, and the blood of sprinkling which speaketh better things.*

Another excuse with many is, I AM TOO MUCH ENGAGED IN BUSINESS TO PREPARE FOR SO SOLEMN A DUTY. "I cannot," says Bishop Patrick, "believe that any man is so employed, that constantly, when he is to receive the sacrament, he must omit it, or be a great loser. It is incredible that his business must be done just at that time, and that none other will serve." He then shews the futility of the excuse, by stating, that if a large sum of money were to be given, every time a person came, few would resist this golden reason; they would, in that case, put aside all other business. Such a view may lead us to detect the real state of our minds. Consider, if the true meaning of this excuse be not this—"I am leading a life inconsistent with the discharge of Christian duties; I am living an unchristian life; and if I die, my soul is lost for ever." The discharge of your religious duties is your first and great business; and you had better let the body perish for want of its proper food, than the soul perish for want

of spiritual food. Remember, however much you are occupied, you will one day stand in judgment before Him, who, though so engaged in providing for your salvation, as not to have time to eat bread, yet spent whole nights in prayer, rather than neglect to fulfil all righteousness. Yet, after all, the due preparation for the Lord's Supper is often much mistaken. This subject will be afterwards noticed. Those who are really so engrossed in this world's business, as to have no time for their most solemn duties, should seriously inquire, whether much of that business that hinders them be not needless, or hurtful to their highest interests. But however this may be, no business of this world can justify the continued neglect of manifest religious duties. *Seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all other things shall be added unto you.*

A third excuse sometimes offered is, I HAVE RECEIVED THE LORD'S SUPPER, AND HAVE FOUND NO BENEFICIAL EFFECTS FROM IT. Perhaps you have mistaken the kind of benefit which you expected, and have looked for sensible and momentary comfort, instead of solid growth in grace. This ordinance has no miraculous power over the animal frame, but supplies the mind with powerful motives and considerations, whereby, through the gracious influence of the Holy Spirit, we are enabled to resist the attacks of our spiritual enemies. It is a means of obtaining spiritual strength from God. The Christian cannot perhaps fully know in this world, what secret strength may thus have been given to him, and how he may have been kept from the ways of sin, and in the ways of God, by the motives here suggested to his mind. But we may very safely, as

to this excuse, put it to every conscience—Can you really say, after you have deliberately prepared yourself for this ordinance, and received it with seriousness, that no resolution against sin has received fresh confirmation, no obligation to obedience has been strengthened? Or at least, is it not presumptuous to question the efficacy, or deny the obligation of attending upon an ordinance of God, merely because you have not yet derived from it all the benefits which you expected?

Again, it is objected, I AM AFRAID THAT, WEAK AS I AM, I SHALL BREAK MY RESOLUTIONS, AND SO INCUR GREATER GUILT. You forget that this ordinance is calculated to strengthen your resolutions. You forget that every temporal blessing you partake of, increases your obligations to serve God. You forget the greater guilt of neglecting a divine institution. But, deliberately ask yourself, "Do I mean to give up myself to the unrestrained enjoyment of sin, and the certainty of endless ruin—or do I wish to be the disciple of Christ, and the heir of his glory?" If indeed you cared not about eternal life, and could be supposed wilfully to choose eternal wrath, this excuse would be less inconsistent. But if you really desire to live with Christ, and to spend a blessed eternity in the mansions above, consider, that the admission of your weakness is the reason why you should constantly go to the Lord's table for new supplies of grace; and if you fall again, as all more or less do, come the oftener to the appointed means of weakening sin, and enlivening faith, hope, love, and every Christian grace.

Some have felt scruples about receiving, because OTHERS WERE AT ENMITY WITH THEM: but this is

not founded on any just interpretation of Scripture. This view would also condemn our Saviour, the twelve apostles, and the whole primitive church; for none had such bitter enemies as they had, at the very time this communion was most frequent.

Others feel the presence of some against whom they have a prejudice, or of whom they have reason to think ill, a sufficient excuse; forgetting the peculiarity of the apostle's expression—HE *that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation* TO HIMSELF, and not to his fellow-communicants; forgetting our Lord knew that Judas would betray him, Peter deny him, and all forsake him, when he celebrated the last Supper with them. Yet we would not by these remarks justify indiscriminate communion. The Holy Scripture (1 Cor. v. 11—13,) as well as the Church of England, directs, that all open sinners be excluded.

Others *receive* ONLY at particular Festivals, not considering, as Chrysostom remarks, that "what makes it reasonable to communicate, is not merely a festival, or the time of a more solemn assembly, but a pure conscience and a life free from sin."

"Some Christians," it has been observed, "enquire whether they should continue to approach the table of their Saviour, when their consciences are burdened with the guilt of any particular sin? To this the answer is obvious, because one end of receiving the body and blood of Christ, is to obtain the very blessings of pardon, and peace of conscience, which the objection supposes to be most wanted. If, indeed, unhappily, we have committed some aggravated offence against God, and the ordinary period of our partaking of the Eucharist be near, it may be expe-

dient to abstain for that season from the Lord's Supper; but this abstinence must be with the express intention of more humbly confessing our sins before God," that we may with sincere penitence and faith hereafter receive.

It may appear wonderful, even allowing the general darkness and corruption of the human heart, that there should be such a prevailing tendency in professing Christians to negligence, in a case where there are so many strong and tender motives for obedience. Some of these fears, possibly, may have originated from the once generally diffused papal doctrine of transubstantiation, and from a general misconception of the Apostle's reproof of the Corinthians, for their irregularities. This part of the subject will be considered hereafter.

Perhaps, however, at the root of all these excuses, there is an unsuspected, secret unwillingness of heart. Men have often a feeling of this kind: it would disturb their quiet, make them uneasy in their mind, and hinder them from enjoying the pleasure that they are wont to take in their sins. Let every one who neglects the Lord's Supper, examine this point well!

From the whole, we may conclude that there is nothing to discourage the PENITENT BELIEVER from a constant and invariable attendance at this table. The duty is manifest, and the advantage great and evident.

And on the other hand, those LIVING in the love and practice of SIN, may here see the grievous state to which their conduct reduces them. You are afraid of going to the Lord's table lest you should eat and drink damnation; but have you no reason to be

afraid of the consequences of disobeying a plain command, by staying away? Your sins reduce you to a sad dilemma of danger. Nothing can deliver you from it but speedy repentance towards God, and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. There is no safety to any living soul, but in fleeing to him *who is able to save!* Let me then earnestly and affectionately entreat all such readers to examine their own hearts, to ascertain without delay their true state before God, heartily to repent of their sins, and seek the salvation of the gospel. Then, when they have experienced a real change of heart, when they are born again of God's Spirit, and have a good hope through grace, they will come and receive the Lord's Supper, not only without danger and reluctance, but with the greatest comfort and advantage.

We will conclude this chapter in the animating words of Bishop Patrick.

"Let no man therefore plead this or that, in excuse for his not coming to the Lord's table; but resolve hereafter carefully to perform so necessary a duty. Let the sinner quit his state of sin and death, and so come and eat of the bread of life. Let the ignorant come into the school of Christ, and proceed till they come to the highest form, to the upper room, where this feast is celebrated. Let those that are at enmity with their neighbours also come; let them only first go and be reconciled to their brethren, and so let them offer their gift. Let those that have a multitude of worldly employments come: only let them leave them, as Abraham did his ass, at the bottom of the mound, and so let them ascend to heaven in their thoughts, and converse with God. Let the weak come, that they may grow in strength; and let the

other his own supper: and one is hungry, and another is drunken. What! have ye not houses to eat and to drink in? or despise ye the church of God, and shame them that have not? What shall I say to you? Shall I praise you in this? I praise you not.

You may here see what grievous and open disorders had crept into the Corinthian church, and need not wonder at the strong expressions of the Apostle, describing the danger of their sin. They slighted the sacred rite which represented the Saviour's death: made no difference between it and a common meal; and were guilty of excesses, even at the very time of its celebration. The way in which the Lord's Supper is now administered among us, renders such a glaring abuse of it impracticable, though it be still possible, in our temper and spirit, to fall into a measure of the same guilt.

It may be first expedient to show, WHAT IS NOT RECEIVING UNWORTHILY. He does not necessarily receive unworthily, who strongly feels his unworthiness; nor does it follow that he must have received unworthily, whose faith is weak. There may be many doubts and fears, much trepidation and anxiety, and yet the heart be in the main right with God; and those distressing feelings may only arise from not fully understanding the riches of Christ, and the liberty of his gospel. Nor yet does it shew this, if we feel the power of indwelling sin? St. Paul could say, *In me, that is, in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing.* This feast is not for angels, but for men encompassed with infirmities. A coldness and dulness in our duties, which we lament, does not of itself shew that we receive unworthily. Some are naturally dull and heavy; but, *if there be first a willing mind, it is ac-*

cepted according to what a man hath, and not according to what he hath not. Some think a mere remembrance of an injury, though without ill will; or many worldly troubles; or the hatred of some one; or if their hearts have been little moved or affected during the solemnity; or if they have been then much harassed and tempted,—that they have therefore received unworthily: but this by no means follows, as this chapter, and various parts of this Treatise will sufficiently prove. Nor yet, if afterward we fall into sin or difficulty, does it necessarily shew that unworthy receiving was the cause. Anxious minds often distress themselves needlessly on these points.

The word UNWORTHILY means, as the context plainly shews, in an unbecoming and unsuitable way; not with that design with which this feast was instituted by Christ, nor in a manner agreeable to its importance and dignity.*

As it respects indeed the PERSONS who receive, those who are living in wilful and allowed sin, those who are impenitent, and have not sought the mercy of God, as poor and perishing sinners, by faith in Christ Jesus, have no suitable qualifications, and no scriptural encouragements to go to the table of the Lord. Our Liturgy justly tells them, "Repent you of your sins, or else come not to that holy table."

He who makes no difference between the sacrament and a common meal, who looks not through the outward emblems, and does not by faith regard them as figures of the Saviour's body and blood, who

* *αναξιως* non eo consilio, quo hoc epulum a Christo est institutum, modo non conveniente dignitati et gravitati rei.—*Schleusner.*

trusts not in Christ's death, and has no love to him, and whose tempers towards his fellow-creatures are unforgiving and malignant,—he discerns not the Lord's body, and receives unworthily.

Nor is this a slight sin, with trivial consequences; —great guilt is contracted, and severe afflictions follow.

Great GUILT IS CONTRACTED. They are *guilty of the body and blood of the Lord.* In the full sense of the terms, this was the guilt of the Jews who crucified the Lord; in a secondary sense, of those nominal Christians who apostatize from the truth. But a measure even of this awful guilt, may be contracted by unworthily receiving the Lord's Supper. A person may thus manifest a contempt of the sacrifice of Christ, and be chargeable with a dreadful profanation of that sacred institution which brings it to our view.

If, christian reader, you would shudder at the idea of imbruing your hands in the Saviour's blood, guard against any approach to so foul an iniquity. True it is, that even this is not unpardonable; for many even of the murderers of our Lord repented and were saved. But surely no Christian can voluntarily slight the Saviour in the greatest instance of his love, with the notion that his amazing goodness may yet pardon this sin. When the question is asked, *Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound?* he will ever reply with the holy Apostle, *God forbid!*

SEVERE AFFLICTIONS HAVE SOMETIMES FOLLOWED THIS GUILT. The unworthy receiver *eateth and drinketh damnation to himself.* The term indeed means not, as some have needlessly distressed themselves

by supposing it does, eternal ruin: but it does imply the condemnation of their heavenly Father, the divine displeasure and anger. That the Apostle means thus much, with temporal chastisements for their sin, is evident from what he afterwards says—*For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep. For if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged; but when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world.* The Corinthians, perhaps, might attribute their sicknesses, and the deaths happening among them, to various natural causes; but an inspired Apostle tells them that these were sent upon them for their profanation of the Lord's Supper. Nay, we must go farther, and say, that supposing a person to continue to receive unworthily, instead of gaining any benefit, his heart will only become more hardened, and his soul in danger of eternal ruin. Indeed, however justly we may soften the words *eateth and drinketh damnation*, into *judgment* or *condemnation*, there is still quite enough in them to deter the careless and presumptuous from heedlessly coming to this table.

But some may ask, How shall I avoid this danger? We add the following directions.

Receive not IGNORANTLY. The Corinthians partook of the elements without discerning the Lord's body. Those err in a similar way, who do not consider the great end designed in the Lord's Supper, and do not look through the sign to the thing signified; as do those also who do not regard the sacrifice of the death of Christ, but go in a self-righteous spirit, as if they were performing a meritorious duty. Do you then seek to understand the design of this

ordinance, and to have right views of the atonement of Christ?

Receive not IRREVERENTLY. We are not indeed in danger now, of those tumultuous and irregular practices which prevailed at Corinth; but is there not, in the minds of some, a want of reverence and holy awe? Do we not sometimes come in a light and careless frame of mind, if not with an impenitent heart? As there is danger on one side of an excess of fear destroying the love and freedom of the child, so there is on the other of failing in that due reverence, which is so suited to the state of sinful and dependant creatures, in all their dealings with their great Creator.

Receive not UNCHARITABLY. The rich Corinthians did not impart of their provisions to their poorer brethren, and thus were evidently deficient in Christian love. If we also entertain a haughty, injurious, and unforgiving spirit towards any human being, and especially towards any of our Christian brethren, we have a temper directly contrary to the spirit of this ordinance, and we shall receive in an unsuitable way. *See that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently.*

Receive not WITH A CARNAL MIND. The Corinthians made their meeting together an occasion for excess and intemperance. Modern habits preclude this. Yet we may also receive with a carnal mind; many worldly passions may be at work; such as looking to see who is there; observing their dress and appearance, and forming worldly designs, when we ought to be engaged in the solemnity. The same carnal mind leads us to look only at the outward service, receiving without spirituality of heart,

and without looking to, or confiding in Christ the Lord.

By giving these directions, it is not implied that any unhallowed or lamented ignorance, irreverence, want of charity, or of spirituality, constitute the sin of unworthy receiving; but if these things are habitual and allowed, undoubtedly we have reason to fear that we have, in some measure, imbibed the spirit of that sin for which the Apostle reproved the Corinthians, and should, without delay, seek for pardoning mercy, and come afresh and in a better spirit to the Lord's Table. Nor need we despair of forgiveness and restoration. It is one part of the gracious character of our beloved Redeemer, that he remedies the mistakes and the rashness of his faithful followers. St. Peter, intending to do his Saviour some service, rashly presumed to cut off the ear of the servant of the High Priest, and might have greatly injured the cause of Christ; but his power and love applied an immediate remedy. Even these Corinthians, though so justly and severely reproved by the Apostle for their former profane manner of communicating, yet so far from being dissuaded from coming again, must be supposed to be individually addressed in those words,—*Let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup.* For, though there be danger of unworthy receiving, there is yet greater danger in wilfully neglecting this ordinance. It is always better to discharge a duty, even though it be done defectively, than to neglect it altogether. We find Hezekiah, when there were many of the people of Israel who ate the passover "otherwise than it was written," not being able, from the pressure of the time, to

cleanse themselves, (2 Chron. xxx. 18.) confidently pleading in their behalf. It was the saying of a truly pious woman, "She had rather spoil ten duties than omit one." Let no threatenings against the minglings of sin with the discharge of your duty, lead you to neglect that duty; but rather lead you to a more conscientious and faithful discharge of the will of God.

CHAPTER IX.

ON THE BENEFITS CONNECTED WITH A DUE RECEPTION OF THE LORD'S SUPPER.

THE performance of each of the duties to which our Lord calls his people, is attended with many advantages: as it regards all his statutes, *in keeping of them there is great reward.* It is so in this duty. While he calls us to remember him, to shew forth his death, and to manifest our expectation of his coming again: in the faithful discharge of this duty, our souls obtain the most important benefits.

It is the general mistake of a mere outward professor of religion, and one to which our fallen nature, even in the best of men, has a continual tendency, to put the means of grace in the place of grace itself. Thus if the nominal Christian reads the Scriptures, he congratulates himself on having performed a work of piety; without considering that they should mainly be read as the means of conforming the soul to the divine image, of quickening and directing it in the good ways of God. So, if he prays to God, he rests in self-satisfaction on the mere act of prayer, without regarding it in its true light, as a principal

means of obtaining help from God for our many spiritual necessities. The same dangerous mistake is made by such persons respecting the Lord's Supper. They are ready to suppose that when they have prepared for it by a course of duties, and have received it in the appointed way, that then they have done all that is required; forgetting that it is a means for a further end—advancement in piety.

The view of its benefits may be comprehended under the general term, A MEANS OF GRACE: a method appointed of God for communicating his grace, whether it refer to the actual enjoyment, or the due improvement of that grace.

It is not, indeed, appointed as a means to convey grace merely by the outward receiving of it, without suitable dispositions, and as a sort of charm. Neither are we to suppose God will pardon or save any, for their mere coming to it. "God does not seem to have bound himself to this or any other ordinance in such a manner, that the immediate influences of his grace should necessarily be connected with it. We cannot say that he has thus invariably tied himself to it, nor does experience agree with such a notion; but, in a regular attendance upon it, we may expect that God will meet and bless us." The same thing is manifest in the preaching of the gospel, which has no power in itself; but God has appointed it, and blesses his own appointment as he sees fit.

It may be considered with reference to its bringing to our recollection a past transaction, and its being a means of both enjoying benefits at the present time, and furnishing a pledge of future blessings.

1. IT BRINGS TO OUR RECOLLECTION A PAST TRANSACTION. It deeply impresses on our hearts the

fact of the death of Christ for sin; an event which it is of the utmost moment that we should never forget; an event which can never be affectionately remembered by the Christian without much advantage. We have seen that the bread and wine are apt figures of the Saviour's body which was broken, and of his blood which was shed for us. What is made visible and tangible, and obvious to all our senses, has naturally a greater effect upon us than what is merely addressed to our understanding, or only treasured up in our memory. We are indeed too apt to rest in the outward sign; so that it was desirable that the sign should only be such a resemblance as might direct our minds to the thing signified; and for this end the emblems here used are peculiarly adapted.

By this sacrament, then, the remembrance of our Saviour's death is preserved with all its freshness in our minds; and the blessings connected with that remembrance are thus bestowed upon us. It was not that he might gain our admiration and praise, that our Lord appointed this ordinance; he needs not honour from man, for all the hosts of heaven worship him. But by this representation of his death, we ourselves are both edified and comforted. "Come here," says Henry, "and see the victories of the cross. Christ's wounds are thy healing, his agonies thy repose, his conquests thy conflicts, his groans thy songs, his pains thine ease, his shame thy glory, his death thy life, his sufferings thy salvation." And do not such recollections tend to produce mingled emotions of holy sorrow and joy, cordial hatred of sin, and ardent love to Christ? We might enlarge on this part of the subject, had it not been in

some measure anticipated in the preceding chapter, on the Design of this institution.

2. We should, however, have only a very inadequate view of its benefits, if we merely considered those which it has a natural tendency to produce, in bringing to our recollection the death of Christ; it must also be regarded as a divinely-appointed MEANS OF ENJOYING SPIRITUAL BLESSINGS AT THE PRESENT TIME. "Its chief excellence is, that it is not only a figure and resemblance of our living on a crucified Saviour, but also a precious instrument whereby Christ, the bread and drink of life, is really conveyed to us, and received by us, through faith. Hereby God exhibits and gives forth Christ and his salvation to true believers, and stirs up and strengthens them to receive and feed upon Christ, by present actings of faith, while they partake of the outward elements."

The Apostle, speaking on this subject, states, *The cup of blessing* * *which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ? For we being many are one bread, and one body; for we are all partakers of that one bread.* 1 Cor. x. 16, 17. This passage will furnish us with a scriptural guide as to the benefits to be expected at the Lord's Table. By communion (κοινωνια,) is meant a participation, a

* The sacramental cup seems called *the cup of blessing*, in allusion to the cup of wine used after the passover, to which the Jews gave this name. They called it so on account of the general blessing of God's providence, and of their redemption from Egypt. Christians have far more reasons to call it the cup of blessing, as commemorating infinitely greater benefits. This cup is blessed, as it is set apart and consecrated to a holy use, even to be a memorial and symbol of the blood of Christ.

communication or enjoyment of the body and blood of Christ.

In order, then, rightly to discern the benefits which we obtain, we must consider what were the blessings obtained for us by the incarnation and death of Christ. His death obtained our PARDON; his blood being *shed for the remission of sins*. Through that blood we obtain the blessing of JUSTIFICATION, and are accounted righteous before God: *Being justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him*. The same sacrifice procures our PEACE, as St. Paul shews at length, Eph. ii. 13—17. Again, *we receive the promise of* THE SPIRIT *through faith* in him, Gal. iii. 14; John vii. 39. The gift of ETERNAL LIFE also comes in the same way—*God hath given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son*. These, with many other blessings which might be mentioned, we obtain by the death of Christ.

The real believer, through the mercy of God, in the right reception of the Lord's Supper, has the present enjoyment of those benefits which were obtained by the sacrifice of Christ, and the strengthening of those graces, in the exercise of which that enjoyment is communicated. Thus the Lord's Supper is calculated to give him an assured hope that the blessings of redemption belong to him, as well as to increase his faith, and to advance his sanctification. It also affords him many social advantages. But, remember, that every blessing obtained here, as well as elsewhere, comes from the mercy of God alone, and through the influences of the Holy Spirit freely given according to his own grace. If we depend only on the means, we may lose the blessing. If we use the means, looking up to the Lord for his

promised grace therein, we shall most probably obtain the spiritual good which we desire: for the means are both adapted and appointed to produce that good.

The believer may obtain here AN ASSURED HOPE THAT THE BLESSINGS OF REDEMPTION BELONG TO HIM.* To have the communion of the body and blood of Christ is, in truth, to have pardon, justification, peace, the Holy Spirit, the gift of eternal life, and *all spiritual blessings in heavenly things in Christ Jesus.* The apostle's question in the passage already quoted, (1 Cor. x. 16, 17.) shews that the Lord's Supper both represents and is a divinely-appointed means for believers having that communion. By the exercise of faith at the Lord's table, therefore, we have the blessings of redemption assured to us, and thus really partake of his body and blood in that way in which only they can be received. When in a journey on a winter's day, we are favoured with a clear sky and a shining sun, we say, "We have the sun with us:" by which we mean the light, warmth, and comfort of his beams: so when the apostle says we have *the communion of the body and blood of Christ*, in the Lord's Supper, he shews that herein the benefits of his sacrifice are enjoyed by us.† As certainly as the

* Our Church leads those who worship according to her ritual to say of the due reception of the Lord's Supper, to our Heavenly Father—"Thou dost assure us thereby of thy favour and goodness towards us." See Observations on this Prayer, chap. v. part ii. of this Treatise.

† In the Catechism it is asserted, that "the body and blood of Christ are verily and indeed taken and received by the faithful in the Lord's Supper;" but the emphatic word *faithful* shews that they are not corporeally but only spiritually received. If the real participation of the actual body and blood of Christ had been intended, the "unfaithful, although unworthy communicants, would equally have been partakers of the body and blood of Christ."

true believer takes the bread and wine, and feeds on them in remembrance of Christ's death, so assuredly do the spiritual blessings obtained by that sacrifice belong to him; and the very ordinance is calculated to give him this happy assurance of faith. It has been well remarked,* "Here we often, like Moses from Mount Pisgah, get extended views of the promised land. Here the mourning saints find joy, the weary rest, the dejected encouragement, and the strong increasing confidence. Here the spirit of faith applies the atonement, and the sense of reconciliation fills our souls *with joy unspeakable, and full of glory.* Christ intends his people should be comforted, should abound in all spiritual joy, and come to a feast, where *gladness is sown for the upright in heart.*" In partaking of this feast, our souls are strengthened and refreshed by new views of our interest in Christ, and a fresh and lively communion with him.†

It is, however, by no means intended to be stated that these comforts are invariably connected with the right reception of the Lord's Supper, or that the communicant has not acceptably received it, who has not felt this *full assurance of hope:* (Heb. vi. 11.) all we intend is, that it is a blessing which the ordinance is designed and calculated to communicate, and which believers do, in favoured seasons, experience. But where so full a blessing is not given, there are yet benefits which are more generally and more constantly obtained. Thus faith, which is the very root of an assured hope, and the spirit of holi-

* See Hawels' Spiritual Communicant.

† The subject of communion with Christ, as one especial benefit of the Lord's Supper, demands distinct consideration, and will be noticed in a subsequent chapter.

ness, which is the only certain or safe evidence that our hope is well-grounded, are here greatly nourished and strengthened.

The grace of FAITH, the root of all other graces, is specially assisted and INCREASED by a due partaking of the Lord's Supper; for this institution is not only the outward sign of the Christian's feeding on Christ through faith, but a most efficacious means to help us to grow in this vital principle of the Christian's life. We must have, indeed, the beginning of faith, (if I may use the expression,) before we go. But faith is a grace of different degrees of strength. There is a *little*, a *weak*, and a *strong* faith; and the weak in faith must be received as a Christian brother, and in time his faith may become strong.

The whole service here is peculiarly calculated to strengthen our faith in Christ, the only Saviour, Bishop Taylor remarks, "Though we are to believe before we receive these symbols of Christ's death, yet, as by loving we love more, and by the acts of patience we increase in the spirit of mortification; so, by believing, we believe more, and by publication of our confession, we are made confident." The ordinance leads us throughout to fix our minds stedfastly and deliberately on Jesus Christ, and him crucified, the proper object of our faith; and all things tend to beget the fullest confidence in the grace of Christ, and the love of our heavenly Father.

The Lord's Supper also tends to PROMOTE OUR SANCTIFICATION. This is a point of vast importance, and one to which all that are in the habit of attending regularly at its celebration, will cordially give testimony. What Christian has not found the

blood of Christ, as here manifested and applied, *purging the conscience from dead works, to serve the living God;* the death of Christ becoming the spring of love, gratitude, and holy obedience? In a believing and vivid recollection of his atonement, the supply of the Spirit of Christ is largely given, both to subdue our corruptions and strengthen our graces. Our separation from worldly vanities thus becomes more easy and more resolute, and our devotion to God more steady and more decided. It has been illustrated by the advantages of a lock on a canal; which raises the vessel, and enables it to begin a new course on a higher stream, and thus it is carried over what would otherwise obstruct its course.

The due attendance on this means of grace will be accompanied by a manifest growth in humility, delighting in God, and doing good. Our spirit will become more meek, and tender, and heavenly. Just as when a sick man, through taking a medicine exactly suited to his disease, begins to recover from his disorder; his appetite returns, his recently enervated limbs are renewed with fresh strength, his lately pallid cheeks catch again the glow of health, he moves about afresh with freedom, and goes to his work with alacrity and vigour, feeling more than ever the blessings of health, from having been confined to his habitation and his sick room: so, when at the Lord's table, we receive "the healthful spirit of God's grace," we *hunger and thirst after righteousness;* we are raised up to new vigour in the spiritual life, we walk again with God, and go to our daily duties with fresh zeal and devotion. In short, all these holy dispositions which mark the character of Christians, are here cherished by the

most effective motives. Our sense of the evil of sin is quickened, our penitence is deepened, and our love to the Saviour, and those for whom he died, is enlivened.

Thus, in these various ways, it is an appointed means of obtaining a richer enjoyment of spiritual benefits, and a higher assurance that they belong to us; and when rightly used, the blessing attends the means.

The blessings of which we have spoken are indeed communicated to believers in prayer, and reading and hearing the Holy Scriptures, and the like; and also in the exercise of grace without external and ordinary means; nor is God confined to any means; but let us ever remember that he has appointed this means also: we cannot expect his blessing in any thing else, if we neglect his appointments; and it is practically found by humble Christians, to be a most efficacious way of gaining spiritual blessings.

Christians have also here many SOCIAL ADVANTAGES. They have the benefit of communion with their fellow-Christians. *For we being many are one bread, for we are all partakers of that one bread.** The formation of the bread and of the wine illustrate the intimate union of Christians. As the loaf is formed of many once separate grains of wheat; so the people of Christ, however once distinct from each other, become connected together by the uniting bond of the Gospel, in the most intimate and close union. As the wine in the cup is formed of the juice of many distinct grapes, which are all blended together, and

* The term ἓις αρτος, rendered *one bread*, may be rendered *one loaf*, describing more strikingly the union of Christians.

thus the various juices become mingled and lost in one: so are the once distinct and varied minds and hearts of Christians united together in Christ Jesus; and thus they have *fellowship one with another.*

The communion of saints is a cheering and delightful subject, tending, the more it is practically considered and experimentally felt, to draw the hearts of Christians nearer to each other. There is a relationship between man and man, effected by the Gospel of our Saviour, stronger than any merely earthly ties; there is a union, closer even than that which subsists in the members of the same body. *As the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body, so also is Christ. So we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another.* The head of the body is Christ; and all his people, whether in heaven or in earth, are members of that body. At the Lord's table we enjoy this communion. The church is here seen as a compact body We gather courage and strength from the sight of our fellow-Christians. Our mutual intercourse, profession, and devotion, animate and stir up each other. One holy sympathy of feeling pervades and runs through the whole company of devout communicants. We become interested in each other's prayers; we sympathize in each other's sorrows; we partake of each other's joys; we are travelling the same road; we have the same enemies and friends; the same difficulties and comforts; the same sorrows and joys. And when Christians thus meet in love, who will not say—*Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!*

It is true, that this communion, as well as the bene-

fits which have been already considered, is perceived in other means of grace; in the intercourse of private life, in Christian conversation, in mutual prayer, and the exercises of charity; but it is especially and peculiarly enjoyed in this ordinance, which is eminently calculated to unite us together, as shewing our common dependence on the death of the same Saviour, our common participation of his grace, our common hope of his glory.

3. We have only farther to notice among the benefits of the Lord's Supper, that a right reception of it is a PLEDGE, earnest, or foretaste, of FUTURE BLESSINGS. The appointed words of the Institution —*Take, eat, this is my body, which is given for you,*— cannot imply less than that the true believer, when he receives the sacred elements, receives a pledge and assurance of the favour of him by whose appointment these words are addressed to him. One of the reformers says—"By commanding us to *take*, he signifies that he is ours: by commanding us to *eat* and *drink*, he signifies that he is become one with us." As the rainbow in the heavens is a token of the covenant between God and the earth, that he will no more destroy all flesh by a flood, and that man may multiply and replenish the earth: so this ordinance may be to us as a token, that God has, by a better covenant, provided a deliverance for us, from a far worst destruction, and obtained for us a heavenly inheritance. The very appointment of this institution by our gracious Redeemer, and its administration to us by his ministers, as they assure us that he is willing to be the food of our souls, and joined to us as a source and support of spiritual life, strength, and consolation; so they afford us the

lively hope that he will never leave us nor forsake us.

Indeed, when holy affections are here excited, and communion with Christ and his people here enjoyed, these things manifest that we have received that gift of the Holy Spirit, which is *the earnest of our inheritance.* As the Lord's Supper is peculiarly calculated to increase faith, hope, and love; so if you can thereby trace in yourselves stronger evidences of *the work of faith, and labour of love, and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ,* your confidence will be increased, that he *who hath begun a good work in you, will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ.*

We have seen what the blessings of the new covenant are, and what the hope of glory is which it sets before us. Is it a small advantage then, to have such a hope strengthened and confirmed by this pledge of God's favour? Does not *he who has this hope, purify himself even as he is pure?*

The due reception of the Lord's Supper is thus one of the most effective means of preparation for the second coming of Christ. Never are we more ready for the immediate presence of our Lord, than when, with a broken and contrite spirit, with a lively faith in his death, with ardent gratitude for his unspeakable mercies, and warm love to our fellow-creatures, we have been remembering Christ at his table. We come from it kind, gentle, and tender-hearted; our souls burn with the pure flame of holy love; we long to spend our whole strength in our Saviour's service; we delight in the exercise of devotion, and we have sensible communion with the Father of spirits; in short, a blessed anticipation and foretaste of the future bliss. There is that grace imparted

through this most expressive ministration of the gospel of our Saviour, which purifies and refines us, makes us meet for the heavenly inheritance, raises us above the love of this world and the fear of death, and almost inclines us to adopt Simeon's words—*Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace; for mine eyes have seen thy salvation.* It is only the Gospel that is efficacious through the grace of God to sweeten life, and console in death; to make us happy here, and blessed for ever hereafter: and no where has the Christian a more perceptible and lively exhibition of the Gospel than in this ordinance.

It may be useful to add a few remarks of a more general nature on this subject.

The reader will have seen that all those blessings which the scriptures promise to faith in Christ, and the possession of Christ, do in fact belong to the faithful communicant. The reason is obvious; no one can duly receive the Lord's Supper, but as he believes in Christ and rests all on him. "Therefore, all that the scriptures say of the riches, and blessings, and treasures, which faith in Christ, as our Redeemer, can procure to us; ALL THAT they say of the benefit of that faith which is absolutely required by, and will be exercised in the due reception of this sacrament."

Many Christians do not expect enough at the Lord's table, and thence lose much of the benefits to be there obtained. We should have a large expectation, and we shall receive largely. We might justly suppose the great God to address the believing communicant, *Ask what I shall give thee;* (1 Kings

iii. 5.) and to urge him further, *Open thy mouth widė, and I will fill it*, Psalm lxxxi. 10. Here we may have the nearest approaches to the Divine presence, that our state in this world admits. The church may say of this means of grace, *While the king sitteth at his table, my spikenard sendeth forth the smell thereof*, Cant. i. 12. There is a blessed manifestation of the Divine Presence to the soul to be here expected. View this ordinance in its true blessedness and glory, and you will justly have enlarged views of the benefits to be derived from it. Real believers may here look for abiding peace of conscience, strength of grace, joy in the Holy Ghost, and overflowing hopes of future blessedness. "It is therefore a fault of many to come rather like prisoners to the bar, than like children and friends to the table; they come trembling and full of confusion. Their apprehension of the danger of receiving unworthily runs into an extreme, so as to become a hindrance to the exercise of faith, hope, and love."

To what has been said respecting the benefits of the Lord's Supper, it is, as has already been cursorily noticed, sometimes objected, "I have been there several times, and seemed to get no benefit." This is a subject which calls for more particular consideration here, as it may remove a difficulty from the minds of humble Christians, and make those who are careless and worldly, sensible that they are wrong.

We allow that all who partake of the Lord's Supper do not receive these blessings. It has long since been stated by our church, "The wicked and such as be void of a lively faith, although they do carnally and visibly press with their teeth, as St. Augustine

saith, the sacrament of the body and blood of Christ; yet in no wise are they partakers of Christ; but rather to their condemnation do eat and drink the sign and sacrament of so great a thing." Those also who receive it merely as a matter of form or custom, or as a self-righteous act to do away past transgressions, without any real hatred of sin, faith in Christ, or love to him; and with perhaps a secret reserve that they may afterwards go on more freely in sin; some slighting it as a common matter, and others over-estimating the outward service, as having a power which was never given it, of atoning for their sins; these communicants do not gain the benefits which have been described,—just as a formal worshipper gains none of the blessings of true prayer.

Do you then find that you have gained no benefit? Ask yourselves a few questions of this kind—Have I ever really repented of my sins and turned to God? If you have no spiritual life, you are not in a state to benefit by an ordinance which is designed for the Christian's growth and nourishment. Have I duly prepared for this ordinance? Perhaps you were engaged in worldly business, when this greater business might, and should, have occupied your mind. Were you not at work, when you should have been in your closet; or reading some book on indifferent subjects, when you should have been searching the scriptures; or enjoying yourself in your family, or with your friends, when you should have been alone? But possibly you did give a considerable time to preparation: inquire then farther,—Have I not rested in my preparation, and expected a blessing from it, rather than from Christ? No preparation must

be trusted in, or put in the place of Jesus; if so, no good will be received. Or enquire again—Is there any secret sin indulged in my life? Israel could nor prosper in the war, on account of Achan's wickedness; nor will you prosper in your spiritual warfare, till your easily-besetting sin is resisted and mortified.

But those who, in humility and seriousness, make the objection which we have been considering, probably have received real, though not sensible benefit. What was the nature of the benefit which you expected? Perhaps you looked for a great increase of comfort and joy when you went; and you returned depressed, broken-hearted, and humbled. But is not that very spirit in which you returned, a real benefit? Isaiah lvii. 15. "If you do not come away with a rejoicing heart, yet, if you come away with a weeping eye," bless God for that mercy. And though you found neither sorrow nor joy, but a distressing deadness, dulness, and coldness, during the whole service, yet perhaps subsequently you manifested more of the *peaceable fruits of righteousness;* possibly you enjoyed the next season of public worship more, or you felt under new obligations to a life of circumspection and holiness; and undoubtedly these were real benefits. God is not confined to our notions of times and seasons, nor to our way of giving his blessings; but, infinite in his wisdom, and boundless in his love, he gives them as will best promote our highest good. But still you say, you are distressed under the mortification of disappointed expectation. Were you not unwarrantably expecting a certain sort of spiritual luxury, the luxury of excited feelings: and need you wonder in this case

that you find yourself, after receiving, dull and insensible? God deals thus with you, in kindness, for your real good. But do you ask, What is now my duty? A time of darkness is the time for faith: let such a one *trust in the name of the Lord and stay* himself *on his God:* a time of disappointment is the time for resignation and submission to the will of God. But after all, we would advise you not to judge of yourself merely by sensible feelings. The benefits are here to be expected, in a patient and persevering use of the appointed means; as in the case of prayer, or other means of grace for the food of the soul: or as in food, medicine, or other means of health to the body. But be assured, if you return with one additional proof of obedience to the will of God, one pious resolution confirmed, one vicious propensity checked; if humility be in any measure advanced, faith at all strengthened, love in any degree enlarged, or hope enlivened, or any Christian grace or temper increased; you have not received without benefit.

Yet, in all, remember, God acts as a JUST and a GRACIOUS SOVEREIGN. We are unworthy creatures, and deserve nothing from him. By our sins, even in using the appointed means, we forfeit all claim to the benefit. If we refuse to give, we must hide our faces in the dust, acknowledging his justice, and our unworthiness. If he gives any blessing, all the praise and glory belong to the riches of his grace.

In closing this chapter another point calls for attention. The ministers of Christ are often required to administer the Lord's Supper to the sick and the dying. In some cases, those who send, seem to think it a kind of passport to heaven; with which they are safe, and without which they are lost. This

is a total mistake of its true nature. If their neglect proceed not from their own wilful fault and disobedience, they may go to heaven without it; while, if they receive it in a self-righteous spirit, they may perish with it. Regeneration, faith in Christ, contrition, humility, love, holiness, these things mark the heir of glory. Yet, there is, on the other hand, some danger lest persons of evangelical sentiments should undervalue this appointed means, and deprive themselves of that comfort, strength, and refreshment, which it is so well calculated to convey. Let the faith of the pious sick and dying, particularly when they have previously been in the habit of receiving, be invigorated by these memorials of Christ; let their hope be enlivened, and their affections enkindled, by the appointed ordinance for commemorating his death. Many have found it a most blessed means of grace, in that solemn hour when all hopes fail, but those which spring from the cross of Christ.

We cannot conclude this chapter on the benefits connected with a due reception of the Lord's Supper, without an earnest and affectionate invitation to true Christians to come to this table.

What is it that keeps you away? Is it worldly business? But do you not bring a curse on all your worldly concerns by neglecting the higher and more important business of life—your everlasting welfare? Is it fear of being engaged to a holy life? You are already bound to that by your baptism, unless you have renounced all hope in Christ, apostatized from him, and are willingly sinking to everlasting ruin. Is it the fear of a divine threatening for unworthy receiving? but are you not already

under the divine threatening for neglecting to come?

Why then do you not come to this holy and happy feast? Look to the Saviour. He, for you, came not to a feast of love, but to endure contempt, and hatred, and death. He, for you, tasted and drank to the very dregs, the bitter cup of divine wrath; and will not you take from his hands the cup of blessing?

Come, then, we entreat you. Let the days again return, when every one that calls himself a Christian shall be a faithful communicant. Let the days again return, when all baptized in the name of Jesus, and professing his religion, shall receive the memorials of his dying love.

How painful to see four-fifths of a congregation leaving the church when this most interesting and beneficial ordinance is just about to be celebrated!

CHRISTIAN FATHERS AND MOTHERS OF FAMILIES, set your servants and the elder branches of your family the example of attendance. They look up to you to guide them. You should not abandon this table; for you will hinder many by your turning back. If you say that you are sinful, and therefore afraid to come, why then do you not repent? The Saviour will receive every weary and heavy-laden sinner that goes to him.

CHRISTIAN SERVANTS, this table is open to you. It is your privilege, as believers in Christ, to be the Lord's freemen, and in his house to feast at the same table with the highest and the noblest of his disciples; they count you brethren and sisters; they rejoice to see you there, and to know that you are members of the one family of Christ. Cast not away

your freedom and your privilege: go to this table, and rejoice in the Lord.

YOUNGER MEMBERS OF A CHRISTIAN HOUSEHOLD, who have come to years of discretion and serious thoughts of your soul, refrain not from these holy solemnities. They will strengthen you amid the seductions of pleasure, establish you in the tempest of youthful passions, and give you wisdom and judgment amidst the inexperience of your early years. Perhaps you have just been confirmed: now then come and receive at this feast the grace which will strengthen your resolutions, and *teach you to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts; and to live soberly, godly, and righteously, in this present world.*

To every one that names the name of Christ, we proclaim the invitation—*Whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.* We place the duty of obeying his plain command before every Christian reader; and charge it on every conscience.

CHAPTER X.

THE HAPPINESS WHICH WOULD FOLLOW ITS GENERAL AND DEVOUT OBSERVANCE.

THE Lord's Supper being an ordinance which is eminently calculated to promote our holiness and happiness as Christians, a reasonable prospect of a far more extended observance of it, in a right spirit, is so delightful, that the author (whose heart is deeply interested in such a hope) will for a little time dwell upon it.

The following considerations may tend to shew that THIS HOPE IS NOT wholly UNWARRANTED. The general prevalence of Christianity through the whole world, at a future time, cannot be questioned. The promise that *the knowledge of the Lord shall cover the earth, as the waters cover the sea,* is, among many others, clear and express. There is also in the scriptures, a marked connexion between the sufferings of our Lord, and the extension of his kingdom. *I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto me. His visage was marred more than any man, and his form more than the sons of men; so shall he sprinkle many nations. When thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he*

shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hands. Indeed, it is the doctrine of a crucified Saviour, fully proclaimed, and accompanied by the power of the Holy Ghost, that is the means of enlarging the kingdom of Christ, and building up his people in their most holy faith. We may well then suppose that an ordinance, commemorating a doctrine specially calculated to advance the conversion and edification of the world, would, were the Gospel more generally and fully received, be much more constantly observed.

We have scriptural authority to expect that the sufferings of Christ will always be remembered with peculiar affection and interest. After the affecting description given of those sufferings in the 22nd Psalm, it is expressly promised—*all the ends of the earth shall remember and turn unto the Lord, and all the kindreds of the nations shall worship before thee.* On this passage Diodati observes—"The true and lively knowledge of the sufferings and glory of Christ shall be given to, and preserved among all nations by the preaching of the Gospel; and especially by the Sacrament of his body, therefore called a remembrance." Luke xxii. 19.

The author has been in some measure led to these remarks, by the following interesting account of one of the first celebrations of this ordinance in New Zealand, an island hardly discovered, or scarcely known to Europeans, till the voyages of Captain Cook, in our late beloved monarch's reign.

The Rev. Samuel Marsden, first chaplain to the colony of New South Wales, in 1819, visited the missions established in this island. After mentioning

that divine service was performed on one occasion, on the Sunday, in a shed, where the four great men in New Zealand, (Shunghee, King George, Pomarree, and Racow) attended; Mr. Marsden says, "All behaved with decorum, and we hope that the day is not far distant, when they will know the joyful sound of the gospel, and have the Lord for their God, in the fullest sense. In the evening we had divine service; and afterwards, the holy Sacrament was administered in this distant land; the solemnity of which did not fail to excite in our hearts sensations and feelings corresponding with the peculiar situation in which we were. We looked back to the period when this holy ordinance was first instituted in Jerusalem, in the presence of our Lord's disciples; and adverted to the peculiar circumstances under which it was now administered, at the very ends of the earth, where a single ray of divine revelation had never till now dawned on the inhabitants."

Which of our Lord's disciples at its first institution would have imagined it should be observed through extended ages, and in the most remote parts of the earth! and why should *we* not now, who have seen such large steps taken towards such a result as we are considering, hope for a far more general observance?

Consider also THE EFFECT OF SUCH A REMEMBRANCE of Christ. Were the death of Christ duly and generally remembered, and had it through the abundant gift of the Holy Ghost, its right influence on men, they would *no longer live to themselves, but to Him that died for them.* Divisions would cease, and Christians *all be one.* John xvii. 21. The whole body would be ONE VAST FAMILY, have one will, one heart, one aim,

and one labour. It would be felt that there is *one Lord, one faith, one hope, one God and Father of all,* above all, through all, and in them all. Righteousness and truth, goodness and kindness, would generally prevail. Love to God, and love to each other, would fill the earth as they now fill heaven ; and in some much lower, but happy degree, these words would be fulfilled: *Behold the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God.*

It was once said of the three thousand first converted to the Christian faith—*they continued stedfast in the Apostle's doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread and in prayer.* May we hope that this description will hereafter be true, not merely of one body of believers in one place, but of all the various and multiplied nations of the earth in every land.

A late writer, in the following paraphrase on that petition in the Lord's prayer, *Thy will be done in earth as it is in heaven,* has delightfully intimated the blessedness of such a conformity to the divine will as we may then expect, " In heaven thy will is the inviolable law. Myriads of ministers encircle thy throne, who cease not to celebrate and serve thee with uninterrupted praises, and unerring obedience. Oh that such fidelity were found on earth! that the sons of men did even now resemble that celestial society, to which they hope hereafter to be united! were animated with the like holy ardent zeal, and could give themselves to God with the same entire devotion! We are blind and vain, but thou art wise and good. Wise therefore in thy wisdom, secure under thy care, great and happy in humility and subjection,

we have no wishes but in thee. Our whole desire and glory is to be, to do, to suffer, whatsoever thou art pleased to appoint."

Christian reader! does not true zeal for the glory of God, and enlarged benevolence for the best happiness of man, equally excite us to pray and labour for the advancement of such a state of blessedness? What a world would this be, if that peaceful, meek, kind, and tender spirit, in which we often come from the Lord's table, were universally diffused! Men would be like angels, and earth like heaven. Yes; what a happy world would this be even now, if all men could, on good grounds, hope that they had received the Holy Spirit, were children of God, and going to his heavenly kingdom; and if the communion of saints were a general blessing! Thus *the Lord shall comfort Zion, he will comfort all her waste places; and he will make her wilderness like Eden, and her desert like the garden of the Lord; joy and gladness shall be found therein, thanksgiving, and the voice of melody.* Isaiah li. 3. Supposing the Lord's Supper to be devoutly and universally observed, it would be as *the tree of life, which bare twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month: and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations.*

Let us then remember that there is much within our own reach for aiding the increase of Christ's government in the world. Every step in the way of righteousness helps to advance and bring it on: every sin which we commit retards its progress, and does something towards hindering not only our own happiness, but the general happiness of the human race. Let us remember, that every additional communicant gained to attend the Lord's Supper in the right spirit,

who before altogether neglected it, or attended it only formally, is another inroad on the kingdom of darkness, sin, and misery; and another approach towards the universal prevalence of that blessed empire, which *is not meat and drink, but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.* Every soul born of God is an additional heir of the kingdom which he has promised to them that love him, and which he will ultimately triumphantly establish.

The universal remembrance of Christ, and the subjection of all nations to him, cannot be indeed scripturally hoped for till his return, and we, by the Lord's Supper, only show forth his death till he come. Then it is that *the kingdoms of this world will become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ;* and then the prayer will be answered, *Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.* Our chief aspirations must be those with which the sacred volume closes; in reply to the last assurance of our Lord: *Surely I come quickly; Amen. Even so, come Lord Jesus.* Let us be hasting to the day of the Lord, and preparing for communion with him, in visible glory in his kingdom, by seeking communion with him in faith and spirit, here below, while he is yet absent from us.

CHAPTER XI.

ON COMMUNION WITH CHRIST AND HIS PEOPLE ON EARTH.

THE communion of the body and blood of Christ is a means of enjoying communion with him on earth, and also a pledge of that glorious communion which Christians hope for in heaven.

There is a communion, a holy and a delightful interchange of affectionate communication between Christ and his people. This agreement, fellowship, and friendship, (and we have the authority of Scripture for applying even such terms to so high and heavenly an intercourse) are so near, entire, and intimate, that the same Scripture compares the union between Christ and his people to that of the husband and the wife. Ephes. v. 25—32;—the vine and the branches. John xv. 1—8;—the body and the members. 1 Cor. xii. 12—27.

It is a communion promised to all his obedient disciples. — *He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me; and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father; and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him.* When Judas, on

hearing these words, asked how the Lord would manifest himself to them, and not to the world, he replied—*If a man love me, he will keep my words, and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him.* Hence it is clear that there is a peculiar manifestation of Christ to his people.

The world, as our Lord intimates, knows not of this communion; it understands it not; it ridicules the idea. But still the real Christian is privileged to enjoy a sensible, perceptible, and enlivening intercourse with his Lord. He has a secret and spiritual access to him, and comfort from him. Jesus Christ is his best friend, and his gracious support, refuge, and strength.

Jesus Christ speaks to him THROUGH THE HOLY SCRIPTURES. Often by them he is touched and affected with godly sorrow for sin, with ardent desires after holiness, and with a lively hope of future glory. Often in reading the sacred volume he hears the voice of Christ, and thus is led to communion with him. His Saviour more directly still imparts grace to his soul, by the gift and teaching of THE HOLY GHOST, whose office it is to take of the things of Christ and show them to us. Thus do we discover his grace and glory, long for his presence, and earnestly seek him. He to whom *all power in heaven and earth is given*, speaks again in HIS PROVIDENCE. If trials and sorrows be sent, consolations are generally at the same time so mingled with them, that in his best moments the Christian thanks God for them. If blessings are bestowed, they are received as given through a Saviour. In every providence, his voice, his hand, and his love may be marked. All are

designed to lead us to nearer communion with him. All should be viewed as the manifestation of his care and wisdom, his compassion and tenderness. The Christian has ears to hear this voice, has eyes to see this hand, has a heart to feel this love. He knows Christ and is known to him.

Christians have an unreserved communion with Christ. Drawn by his Spirit, they rejoice to go to him. They love his day, his house, his people, and every path of duty where they find their Saviour. His grace descends on them, and their hearts are raised to him. *Truly*, says St. John, *our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ.* There is no friendship on earth so entire, so unreserved, and so invaluable, as that which subsists between Christ and the faithful soul. It is a friendship which has ever subsisted between the believer and his God. *Enoch walked with God. Abraham was called the friend of God.* Jesus said to his disciples, *Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you. Henceforth I call you not servants, for the servant knoweth not what his Lord doeth; but I have called you friends, for all things that I have heard of my Father, I have made known unto you.* How many are the benefits of having such a friend! He is a friend always near at hand, ever willing to hear us, who bears with our infirmities, who instructs us with the wisest counsel, gives us the most effectual aid, and never leaves us nor forsakes us. He is an unchanging and an unchangeable friend. The Christian's privilege is to know this friend, consult him, ask for his guidance, converse with him, tell him all his sorrows, and all his sins, depend on him for support in all difficulties, for supplies in all wants, and to cast all

his care upon him. Thus he has communion with Christ.

This communion is SPECIALLY ENJOYED AT HIS TABLE. A blessed intercourse with Christ, as of one friend with another, and an exchange of the endearing pledges of mutual love, are what this sacrament is greatly calculated to promote. What Christian has not found, that as the eyes of the disciples at Emmaus were opened, our Lord making himself known to them *in the breaking of bread;* so sometimes now at his table, he manifests himself to his people, and they too are ready to say to each other, *Did not our hearts burn within us while he talked with us by the way?*

Just after the first reception of the Lord's Supper, and with a direct reference to that institution, our Lord said, *I will drink no more of the fruit of the vine, until that day that I drink it new in the kingdom of God,* Mark xiv. 25. see also Matt. xxvi. 29. The term *new* often signifies the excellence, truth, and superior nature of what was so named; and *wine* is a common figure for joy and gladness. *The kingdom of God* may either refer to his spiritual kingdom in this world, or his kingdom of glory hereafter. Under this figure, then, of drinking new wine with his disciples, our Lord may first intend to denote the passing away of the Jewish, and the superior excellence of the Christian dispensation; the joy of his people through the power of the Holy Ghost in their Saviour, and his joy in them, in the church militant on earth. And as the passage is connected with the Lord's Supper, it seems to include a blessed promise of a peculiar communion with his people in their due observance of that institution. In this view of the

Lord's Supper, we have here not only communion with our Christian brethren, but also the highest and most delightful communion with our Saviour, in that spiritual kingdom which he has established on earth, as well as the happy prospect of being ever with him in the heavenly kingdom.

The mode of expression—*drinking new wine in the kingdom of God*, suggests many encouraging thoughts.

It shows us that Christ there PECULIARLY MANIFESTS HIS PRESENCE. Though invisible to the eye of sense, the eye of faith can behold him as the present and the real Head of the family; not only coming in like the king in the marriage-supper, to see the guests, but, though unseen, presiding over all who assemble around his table, and blessing them according to their wants. How refreshing the thought, that here Christ is, as it were, inviting every faithful disciple to partake of his blessing, saying, *Eat, O friends;—drink, yea, drink abundantly, O beloved!* A supply for every want of our souls is thus offered and assured to us. The atonement through his blood, the remission of sins, the love of God, the gift of the Holy Spirit, and all the blessings of the new covenant, are afresh exhibited and assured to every believer by the appointed ministers of Christ, and under his special direction.

The expression, *drinking new wine*, suggests also that FREEDOM with which we here have intercourse with our Lord. We feel a degree of liberty and freedom with those with whom we are permitted to eat and drink. The Christian has this blessed freedom of access to Him, who *is God over all, blessed for ever;* to one higher than the highest. Our Lord conde-

scends to say, *If any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me*, Rev. iii. 20. The great monarch whom Christians obey puts on no haughty and distant coldness and reserve: though infinite dignity and glory are shed around him, all is softened by infinite condescension, grace, and love. While Christians have the King of kings for their Lord and Saviour, they have a perfect freedom of access to this great King, even as to a bosom friend.

This communion is calculated to fill us with JOY. The most enlightened, devoted, and comprehensive mind, cannot conceive a higher joy on earth than that which he experiences, on whom the Lord *lifts up the light of his countenance*. The most exquisite earthly enjoyments, the tenderest sensibilities of our nature, joined to the highest delights of human friendship and love, are all poor and vain, compared with those superior joys which Christ can and does bestow on his friends. What communion on earth can be like communion with our God? What love on earth equals his who died for us, and who lives to make intercession for us? Whose excellences of wisdom, equity, tenderness, power and glory, can compare with Christ's? Are we privileged to have access to *the Wonderful, Counsellor, the Mighty God, the Prince of Peace?* surely the very prospect of it should excite the liveliest desire after it; the enjoyment of it should make the pleasures of the world for ever worthless and tasteless. Christian reader! lose not your happiness in the mere vanities of time and sense, but seek to rise to the full enjoyment of your amazing privileges.

This subject may well afford great consolation in

all the troubles of this life. Whatever your difficulties may be, whether from the state of your affairs, from the perverseness of those around you, from the power of indwelling sin, or from many temptations; still, spiritual communion with your Saviour in his kingdom of grace, and the hope of full and perfect enjoyment of him in his kingdom of glory, may well both support and console you. Come then to Jesus in every period of sorrow. He is your Refuge and Strength. In communion with him, every trouble will be greatly mitigated, or altogether removed. What tongue can tell the happiness of him who lives with his Saviour as with an ever-present companion and guide; who has communion with Jesus as an almighty, all-sufficient Friend; who became man for our salvation, and is still touched with a feeling of our infirmities, and sympathizes with us!

But communion with Christ here on earth, however enjoyed, whether in daily prayer, in his house, through his providences, by his word, or at his table, is the sure PLEDGE of eternal abiding with him in the glory which is to come. Those who hear the voice of Christ, whom he knows and who follow him, are his people, and of them he says, *I give unto them eternal life, and they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of my hand.*

It is not only the pledge, it is also the FORETASTE of this bliss,—the beginning of those eternal joys which shall never fail. When in a right spirit you surround the Lord's table, you have a type and emblem, faint it is true, yet sufficiently significant, of the glorious feast above. Here indeed Christ is only invisibly present; but the spiritual joys here felt are similar to those above, and the holy

feelings here excited, are the beginning of a more perfect holiness to be for ever possessed hereafter. Here indeed we see him by faith; there by sight: here all that encompass the table are imperfect; there all who surround the throne are perfectly holy. Here they are soon obliged to separate; there they 'go no more out,' but live in the perpetual enjoyment of holiness, love, eternal glory and the presence of Christ. But to have at this table any earnest of the future inheritance, and any anticipation of its songs of triumph, its holy joys, and its blessed employments, may well endear the solemn ordinance to every faithful communicant.

Let us then now proceed to notice the HEAVENLY COMMUNION.

CHAPTER XII.

ON THE HEAVENLY COMMUNION TO BE HEREAFTER ENJOYED WITH OUR LORD.

In the Lord's Supper the Apostle tells the Corinthians, *as often as ye eat this bread and drink this cup, ye do shew forth the Lord's death till he come.* Till the return of our beloved Lord and Master *the cup of blessing which we bless* is *the communion of the blood of Christ*, and *the bread which we break* is *the communion of the body of Christ.*

But when that all-glorious and *blessed hope* to those who look for the Saviour is realized, and he appears in glory, *we shall be like him*, and *see him as he is*, and *ever be with him.* The words *till he come* seem to imply that we shall not need this memorial of his body and blood when we shall have his glorified body in the midst of us, and we behold all that amazing glory, with which he is now encompassed, for ever.

'TILL HE COME'—how many blessed thoughts may these words awake in the heart of every faithful communicant! They warn him first against confounding his present privileges with the mercies that

are in store. They are the voice of heavenly love, reminding him, in the time of richest present grace, *Thou shalt see greater things than these.* This is but the earnest and the foretaste; the fulness is to come. We are so apt to be content with little when God would give us much; the oil of divine grace is stayed so often, through want of an open vessel to receive it, that we need most of all, at this holy feast, to raise our thoughts still higher, to enlarge our desires still further, and to wait by hope for the full glory that is to be revealed.

'*Till he come.*' Then every sacrament is a sacrament and pledge of our Lord's return. It is a herald to announce that he is on his way. It is a present earnest of richer blessings to be given at his appearing. It is an assurance that the Lord of the vineyard will not be absent for ever; and that shortly, in the appointed season, *his glory shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together.*

These words remind us then of our duty and our privilege in this holy ordinance. Our duty is to remember and show forth not only the death of Christ, but his kingdom also. We must not separate in our thoughts *the sufferings of Christ and the glory that shall follow.* Our simple faith in the one must be a pattern of our simple hope in the other. In equal simplicity we are to receive every promise in scripture, of forgiveness through his blood, of kingly power and priestly honour at his appearance. The freeness and blessedness of our communion by faith at his table, must not abate, but quicken, our desires for open vision, and the speedy arrival of that time when we shall be like him, seeing him as he is.

They remind us too of our privilege. Our Lord

himself, in the time of his sufferings, endured for the joy that was set before him. The thought of his future glory stood foremost in his mind, when he appointed this sacred rite. *I will not henceforth drink of this fruit of the vine, till I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom.* Our privilege is to imitate our blessed Lord and Saviour. We too may look forward with joy to his coming, as the seal and pledge of the renewal of all things, of a higher feast of new and heavenly love, of a full unveiling of the Father's kingdom. Then, not the fruit of the vine only, but *all things shall be made new.* Then not the apostles only, but all the people of God, shall be with Christ, and behold his glory. Then the sacramental shadows shall be swallowed up in the heavenly substance, and the wine of heavenly joy and gladness fill the hearts of the redeemed. And above all, the petition will then be accomplished, *Thy kingdom come, thy will be done in earth as it is in heaven.* In pointing us to this glorious hope, the prayer and the supper of the Lord conspire in blessed harmony, and unite in this watchword to the sleeping church, '*Yet a little while, and he that shall come, will come, and will not tarry.*' Oh, that there were such an heart in every Christian as in their Lord himself, to wait and long for this promise of his appearing! How would it raise them above earthly dreams, and wean them from earthly vanities, and set their hearts on fire with the holy fervour of love, and enlarge their souls, in prayer and earnest intercession for the salvation of men and the glory of God their Father.

Every time that we celebrate the Lord's supper, brings us, then, into a nearer view of our Lord's return. So many weeks, so many months of delay

are past, and the dawning light grows clearer and clearer to the eye of faith, till the Sun of righteousness himself shall arise. By each of these sacred feasts the church is nourishing herself in the wilderness for the bridal of joy, till her numbers be full, her stains removed, the sinful bodies of her members made clean by the body of Christ, their souls washed in his most precious blood; when the King himself will appear in his beauty, and gather his saints who have here made covenant with him by sacrifice, to an eternal feast of joy, holiness, and love.

If communion with Christ on earth, with our weak faith, and feeble hope, and faint love, be so great a privilege, how much greater will be the blessedness of that WHICH WE SHALL ENJOY IN THE HEAVENLY JERUSALEM! The highest figures are used to give us some view of the future glory. It is called a kingdom, a father's kingdom; a crown, a crown of glory. It is paradise, the paradise of God; a marriage supper, the marriage supper of the Lamb. Let us then endeavour to contemplate the exceeding bliss of that day, when we shall, in the highest sense, drink new wine in the kingdom of God. Thus St. John describes that scene of glory—*The marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready: and to her it was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white; for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints. And he saith unto me, Write, Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb. And he saith unto me, These are the true sayings of God.* Rev. xix. 7—9.

Conceive, then, the immortal soul prepared and made meet for that eternal inheritance; wholly free

from all guilt and pollution, and admitted into the heavenly company. Conceive also the glorified body, raised from the sleeping dust, or changed from its present state of humiliation even while living, and fashioned like the glorious body of Christ, as manifested on the Mount, and all the righteous there shining as the sun in the kingdom of the Father, and then you will be able to form some better idea of that supreme happiness which we can never fully conceive until it is experienced.

Let us first notice THE JOY OF OUR LORD IN THE HAPPINESS OF HIS PEOPLE. Is there a purer or higher joy than the perfect happiness of those whom we love, when we have contributed to it? Such is the joy of our Lord and Saviour. What words can declare his love to his redeemed? How he loved them with an everlasting love, loved them when enemies, died for them, strove with them; and, when perverse and obstinate, overcame them even by love itself! They are *the travail of his soul*, and their happiness is the reward of his sufferings. In the scene of ineffable glory of which we now speak, Christ beholds them completely blessed in him, and with him. His, and his father's glory, are in a new way manifested to all created intelligences by the bliss of ransomed sinners. For this joy *he endured the cross*. How will the joy of Christ, beloved as he is by the Christian, fill and enlarge every believer's heart with the highest gladness!

The Christian shall there BEHOLD THE GLORY OF CHRIST. We think the apostles and first disciples favoured who beheld his veiled glory. We wonder not at Zaccheus climbing a tree to get even a glimpse of the Son of God, when he dwelt on earth.

Christian reader! realize by faith, for a moment, the delightful thought that your eyes shall behold your beloved Saviour in glory, a glory which made the three favoured disciples say, *Lord, it is good to be here*, and be able stedfastly to gaze on his matchless beauty, without being confounded by the effulgence of his brightness! Hard it is for us now to raise our souls to any view of him by faith; but then, without difficulty, or wandering, or effort, we shall, with perfect ease and happy freedom, behold our gracious Redeemer, *face to face, and see him as he is.*

We shall also HEAR THE WORDS OF CHRIST. What heart can imagine the bliss of that day when Christ himself shall say unto you, *Enter thou into the joy of thy Lord.* Then we shall not, as now, by painful studies, by the experience of many trials, by continual struggling and effort in prayer, attain some faint knowledge of God and his ways, for Christ himself shall converse with us, and we with him. Then will he show us the wisdom and love of our heavenly Father, in all that now seems dark and obscure, for he will fulfil that promise, in its greatest and fullest meaning—*What I do thou knowest not now, but thou shalt know hereafter.* And not only will the goodness of our heavenly Father be thus discovered to us in all past events, but we shall enter into a far deeper knowledge of his excellence than we can now conceive, and shall better understand the declaration, *This is life eternal—to know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent.*

We shall also CONSTANTLY DWELL WITH CHRIST. Here the Christian has in some happy moments had a transient glimpse of his future bliss, and occa-

sionally has been filled with joy unspeakable and full of glory. But how transient! How soon the eye of faith becomes dim! How soon the affections again sink and grovel on the earth? How soon the spiritual view of the glory and presence of Christ disappears! It will not be so there. That prayer will then be fully answered,—*Father, I will that they also whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am;* perpetually with me, never more to be separated—*that they may behold my glory.* Happy would the Christian be, did no sin now obscure the light, and damp the joy of communion with Christ. Happy would he be, could he always live with Christ, and always be near and close to him. It will be so then. We shall never, through corruption, leave him; and he will never be provoked, by sin, to leave us.

Thus shall the Christian SHARE THE JOYS OF HIS SAVIOUR. That high and holy fellowship and friendship, which began on earth, and here afforded some bright beams of peace, of hope, and happiness, shall be perfected above. O what heart can now conceive the things which God hath prepared for them that love him! We shall understand what we cannot now even imagine; we shall know in our happy enjoyment of them the full and complete meaning of those words—*In thy presence is fulness of joy; at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore;* and of those also—*I will come in to him, and sup with him, and he with me.* Rev. iii. 20.

Then shall the Christian share also THE GLORIES OF THE SAVIOUR. His promises are very full on this point—*To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne.* This must be a

glory far beyond our highest present thoughts, but it is often brought before us in scripture, to animate our hopes. *If we suffer, we shall also reign with him; He hath made us, unto our God, kings and priests, and we shall reign on the earth.* Oh what a calling is the Christian's calling: what a hope, the Christian's hope? He is chosen out of the world to be an *heir of God, and a joint heir with Christ.* May we set this prize before us, and press towards the mark for it, and having respect to the recompense of reward, may we count *the reproach of Christ* here, greater riches than all the treasures of this world.

The whole energies of soul and body will then be delightfully and for ever engaged in DOING THE WILL OF GOD; even as the angels now do in heaven; the zeal and activity of the glorified saint, in his happy course, will never cease. *As the throne of God and of the Lamb* shall be there, so *his servants shall serve him, and they shall see his face, and his name shall be on their foreheads, and there shall be no night there, and they need no candle, neither the light of the sun, for the Lord God giveth them light, and they shall reign for ever.*

Nor, having mentioned in a former chapter the communion of saints on earth as one of the benefits connected with a due reception of the Lord's Supper, must we altogether pass by that far more exalted, and that perfected COMMUNION OF SAINTS IN HEAVEN; when without any alloy of sin in ourselves, or in them, we shall join the heavenly hosts in glory. The heart of the believer, in the lively exercises of faith, almost sickens with desire to enter the blissful society of *the spirits of just men made perfect;* to be like the holy angels, and ever with them; to join the glorious company of the apostles, the goodly fellow-

ship of the prophets, the noble army of martyrs, and the whole church universal and triumphant. Who can tell the enraptured emotions of the redeemed soul, escaping from the snares of every enemy here, when he shall ascend to dwell with none but friends; none but holy and blessed spirits, full of love and of happiness! What will it be to associate with them, to partake their bliss, to leave for ever this lower scene of darkness, toil, and conflict; and there *to sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven!* O Christians, how eagerly should we look for, how *earnestly haste unto*, and how diligently prepare for, the coming of that day!

A TREATISE

ON

THE LORD'S SUPPER.

PART II.

DESIGNED TO ASSIST THE COMMUNICANT IN DEVOUTLY RECEIVING AND IMPROVING IT.

PART II.

CHAPTER I.

ON PREPARATION FOR THE LORD'S SUPPER.

IT is very desirable not to enter on any spiritual service with a careless and heedless mind; and the more solemn the duty is, the more needful and desirable is a due preparation for it. The common decencies of life, teach men that, when invited to the table of a monarch, or to associate with princes and their earthly superiors, they should appear with suitable marks of respect, and so behave as may best please and honour those who have invited them. Much more when invited to the nearest communion with the King of kings, should Christians seek so to act as may please him. If David, under the Legal Dispensation, attending the sacrifice of a slain beast only, felt it right to say, *I will wash mine hands in innocency, and so will I compass thine altar, O Lord;* surely we, in commemorating the actual sacrifice of

the Son of God, should make similar preparation. These general considerations are much strengthened, when we remember the danger of unworthy receiving, and the benefits of a due reception. We need not, however, merely infer the duty on these general grounds. There is an express direction of the apostle—*Let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup.*

Preparation may be considered in two respects; that which is requisite before our first reception of the Lord's Supper, and that which it is desirable to make whenever we afterwards receive it. We will consider the first now, and the other in a subsequent chapter.

The time of first communicating is a critical period in a man's life, which may much affect his future communions, as well as his whole future life. If we then duly receive, it may be a blessing to us ever after.

With respect to the PERSONS who ought to communicate, we may notice, that to be a right partaker of the Lord's Supper, a man must be a SINCERE CHRISTIAN; one who is sensible that he is a fallen, sinful creature; feels the guilt and corruption of his own heart; has repented of his sins; knows that there is only one way of salvation, by faith in Christ; is looking to him for that salvation, and desires above all things to win Christ, and be found in him.

Bishop Taylor justly remarks, "He that is not freed from the dominion of sin, he that is not really a subject of the kingdom of grace, he in whose mortal body sin does reign, and the Spirit of God does not reign, must at no hand present himself before the holy table of the Lord—He is God's enemy, and

therefore cannot receive his holy Son." The Lord's Supper is designed "for the strengthening and refreshing of the soul," and not for the first communication of spiritual life.

But as this is a point of some difficulty, and one which is generally left to each individual to decide for himself, it may be well to enter more into particulars.

As to OPEN SINNERS, the case is perfectly clear; every Christian concurs with the exhortation of our church: "Therefore, if any of you be a blasphemer of God, a hinderer or slanderer of his word, an adulterer, or be in malice, or envy, or in any other grievous crimes, repent you of your sins, or else come not to that holy table; lest after the taking of that holy sacrament, the devil enter into you, as he entered into Judas, and fill you full of all iniquities, and bring you to destruction both of body and soul."

The primitive churches were very particular on this point. "Let no Judas," says Chrysostom, "no lover of money, be present at this table; he that is not Christ's disciple, let him depart from it. Let no inhuman, no cruel person, no uncompassionate man, or unchaste, come hither. I speak this to you that administer, as well as to those that partake."

Indeed it is both prejudicial and unprofitable to the wicked. Just as the rain that falls upon a rock, does not penetrate, and soften, and fertilize it, but ever runs off from it; so the wicked, by their sinful and hard hearts, repel that gracious influence which would otherwise enter and bless their souls.

But while the case is clear as to open sinners, there is a large class of persons, in the main, of a

moral character, but who manifestly have not that *spiritual mind which is life and peace, who are* walking not after *the spirit but after the flesh*, and we cannot recommend such persons, while in this state of mind, to go to this table. Let them *repent and believe the gospel*, and then come. The graces of repentance, faith, humility, charity, and the like, are needful to a due reception of the Lord's Supper. Men are destitute of these by nature; and till the Holy Ghost be received, there are none of these evidences of spiritual life. Now if we give ever so much meat and drink to a dead man, it can neither bring him to life, nor nourish him; and so this holy ordinance cannot profit a man dead in sins, and without a spiritual appetite and spiritual dispositions.

Yet on the other hand, it may be observed, for the comfort of humble Christians, who are sometimes in a great strait between a sense of their unfitness, and the obligation of a plain command, that this ordinance requires not perfection in any grace in those who come. If a man have but the very beginnings of holy dispositions, let him come to have them strengthened. The remarks of one of the Reformers (the great Calvin) on this point, may help the reader to come to a right decision. Speaking of those for whom this ordinance is intended, he says, "Let us remember, that this sacred banquet is medicine to the sick, comfort to the sinner, alms to the poor; but that it would confer no advantage on the healthy, the righteous, and the rich, if any such could be found. The best and only worthiness that we can present to God, is to offer him our vileness and unworthiness, that he may make us worthy of his mercy; to despair in ourselves, that we may find

consolation in him; to humble ourselves, that we may be exalted by him; to accuse ourselves, that we may be justified by him." Speaking afterwards of the necessity of faith and charity, he says, "There are those who have fallen into a considerable error respecting the degree of these graces, requiring a perfection of faith to which nothing can approach, and a charity equal to that which Christ has manifested towards us. But by this requisition they exclude all men from access to this sacred supper. For if their opinion were admitted, no person could receive it but unworthily; since all, without a single exception, would be convinced of their imperfections. And surely it must betray extreme ignorance to require *that* in the reception of the sacrament, which would render the sacrament unnecessary and useless; for it was not instituted for the perfect, but for the imperfect and feeble; to awaken, excite, stimulate, and exercise their graces of faith and charity, and to correct the defects of both."

Let us now proceed to consider more particularly, how we may prepare for that ordinance which the Lord has instituted.

A KNOWLEDGE OF ITS NATURE is in the first place requisite, that when we come to his table, we may *discern the Lord's body*. The previous chapter will, we trust, have given you sufficient information on this point. Read over to yourselves those parts of scripture which dwell on Christ's atonement, (as Isaiah liii.) and his death, (as John xix.) the nature of the New Covenant, (as Heb. viii.) the accounts of this institution given in the holy scriptures, (Matt. xxvi. 26—30; Mark xiv. 22—26; Luke xxii. 15—20; 1 Cor. x. 16—18; xi. 17—34.) and our Lord's state-

ments respecting the nature, necessity, and advantages of faith in him. John vi. 28—71. Remember, it is intended to bring to your remembrance Christ's death as a sacrifice, taking away your sins; it represents that death to you; it instructs you in the nature and need of faith in him; it offers afresh his benefits to you; and, rightly received, assures you of your interest in them.

SELF-EXAMINATION AS TO THE STATE OF YOUR OWN MIND AND HEART, is another material point. By self-examination we mean a diligent search into the true state of our character, as it is in the sight of God, by comparing it with his holy word.

Remember, before you begin this work, that, however vile and evil your heart may be found, still the Gospel of Jesus provides a full remedy: Jesus is the Saviour of the chief of sinners, and will reject none that come to him. He is more full of truth and grace, than you are of sin. With these views you will not be afraid to discover and bring to light the very worst sins which you have committed, and with these views it will also be more easy to discern any graces which his Spirit may have wrought in you. Though his table is for his children, his Gospel is for every creature. Believe his Gospel, and then you become his child, (John i. 12.) and shall be welcome to his table.

You have not to examine whether Christ will receive such a sinner as you are. There can be no question raised upon that: he invites you to come, (Matt. xi. 28.) and you have only to believe his word, and go to him in the conviction of its truth. Your proper inquiries are, whether you have come to him? whether you are already in a state of salvation? and

if so, whether you are growing in grace, and in the knowledge of Jesus?

There are holy dispositions and tempers, there is a peculiar conduct and conversation, stated in the Holy Scriptures, as marking the character of all the children of God. And then, with more especial reference to our receiving the Lord's Supper, the intention of mind in going to this table should be examined. There may be wrong motives for going; as, to obtain a religious character;—from an idea of thereby meriting divine blessings;—because others go;—or merely to gratify our friends. These are improper motives, and should be guarded against. We should be influenced to approach his holy table simply by a regard to the authority of Jesus Christ, and a desire to obtain, in the appointed means, his grace and blessing. There are, besides, qualifications and graces of the Holy Spirit, suitable for the due reception of the Lord's Supper. We should ascertain whether we possess these.

The Church of England has, in its Catechism, given very plain and valuable instruction on the nature of the duty of self-examination; nor do I think that I can put the subject in a more instructive form, than by bringing that before you. In answer to the question, "What is required of them who come to the Lord's Supper?" we are told "To examine themselves whether they repent them truly of their former sins; stedfastly purposing to lead a new life; have a lively faith in God's mercy through Christ; with a thankful remembrance of his death; and be in charity with all men." This answer shews us that we should examine whether we do in reality possess that repentance, faith, gratitude, and charity, which

are necessary to our receiving the Lord's Supper with spiritual benefit. A few observations will now be made on these points, for the purpose of assisting you in your examination.

Inquire, then, as to your REPENTANCE. Do you know your exceeding sinfulness before God? You cannot repent of your sins without knowing them; nor can you know them but as you are acquainted with the word of God. *By the law is the knowledge of sin.* It is from ignorance of the holy law of God, that we hear so many say, 'they are not great sinners —they are not worse than others—and they have never done any thing particularly wrong.' Even when they admit that they are sinners in general, they will not confess that they are guilty of any one particular transgression, nor do they feel that they daily *come short of the glory of God.* Alas! such know not God's perfect law, and are wholly ignorant of themselves. They may know the character of thousands around them; they may know the histories of thousands of years of every country; but they know not what is to them the most important of all—the history of their own hearts, and their own lives. We are not only sinners in general, but we never did one thing wholly free from sin. We are born in a sinful world, prone to iniquity from our earliest years, and through the whole course of our lives we have been offending God. Every day, from our rising up to our lying down, in many things we offend. For, what is sin?—not merely what man will acknowledge to be wrong, or what human laws punish; but sin is what God says is wrong. *Sin is the transgression of the law of God.* What says that law? It requires us to love God with all our heart, and our neighbour

as ourselves. It calls us *to be spiritually-minded.* It tells us, *whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God.* The bare recital of these things will shew us, if we are duly conscious of our state, that there is not a day nor an hour in which we do not fall short of God's requirements, and sin in his sight. The reasonableness of God's law, his tender grace and mercy, redemption by Jesus Christ, the proffered aid of the Holy Spirit, and the long-suffering and forbearance of God, are all powerful and plain arguments why we should keep his commandments, and therefore aggravate our disobedience. In inquiring, then, as to the reality of our repentance, each of us should ask himself, What are my thoughts of my sins? Do they grieve me as being committed against God? Have I another thought of sin to what I once had? Do I loathe and hate sin as the worst of all evils? Have I thus an habitual mourning for sin? a broken and contrite heart? It is the first work of the Holy Spirit to convince us of sin; have I sought the gift of that Spirit!

Our repentance, if sincere, will be proved by "stedfast purposes to lead a new life." Has the conviction, then, of your sinfulness, led you to see your need of a new heart and a new spirit, without which you can never lead a new life? Under a deep conviction of the infinite importance of fleeing from the wrath to come, have you determined to do so? Have you, in retirement, seriously reflected on these things? Have you, in short, come to a deliberate and solemn resolution to give yourself up to God? Your examination on this point should include an inquiry not only as to *godly sorrow for sin, but as to the determination to walk in newness of life.*

Another material subject of inquiry is, as to your FAITH. Have you a lively faith in God's mercy through Christ! Has the conviction of your sinfulness led you to seek, as a poor and lost sinner, those mercies which are treasured up in Christ Jesus? It is only those who know and trust in Christ the Saviour, that are in a state of meetness for the Lord's Supper. And here you have need to watch against self-deception. Many think that they have faith in Christ when they have it not. If we were to ask them, Do you believe in Christ? they would be ready to take offence at the question, and to reply, "Do you take me for an infidel? I am a Christian, and of course believe in him?" But, alas! this is not a thing of course. Would to God that all who are called Christians were really trusting in Christ Jesus! Real faith is not, as you will have seen in a former chapter, a mere uninfluential assent of the understanding to the truths of Christianity; but such a belief of the gospel as leads us to a daily and hourly trusting in Christ for a supply of all our necessities.* It does

* The nature of faith may be illustrated by the following circumstance. In the late winters in London, when distress had been general, a place was fitted up for the reception of the houseless poor. Bills were posted up in different parts of the town, directing persons where to find this refuge. Many read them out of mere curiosity, and fully assented to the truth of the fact, and thought nothing more about it; but the poor and destitute read them as having a deep interest in them, as a guide to direct them where to go for food, and lodging, and all they needed. Is our faith in God's word such as this? Does it lead us to Christ? The same image will further illustrate this subject. If any who were poor and destitute read the bills to which we have alluded, but did not believe them, or thought that if they applied, *they* would not be accepted; or if they did not come, because they loved better to prowl about in the streets, practice violence, and commit licentiousness; such persons acted the very same part with unbelievers in Christ, who may acknowledge the truth of what the gospel declares, but still do not individually come to Christ for the blessings which he has promised to those who apply to him.

not only produce a mere outward profession of Christianity, but a reliance on Christ as our Saviour, a personal reliance on him for ourselves, a coming to him individually in our own case as our Teacher, and an obedience to him as our Governor. There is another very common error—that of trusting in a vague notion that God is merciful, and all will be well. Is this a *lively* faith in God's mercy *through Christ?* far from it. Let not a mere idle fancy, or uncertain notion like this, built on no solid foundation, satisfy you. You want a lively faith, a faith that leads you to rely on the Saviour, that influences the heart, moves the affections, and excites us to work for God; and yet renounces all hope but in Christ Jesus, as the channel through which every blessing flows, the treasury of spiritual riches, and the fountain of every good. Inquire then, Where am I fixing my hopes? On whom do I depend for salvation? Is it not in part on my own goodness, my own prayers and endeavours? You must indeed strive, and labour, and pray, or you will never be saved; but even if you did all required, you are an unprofitable servant; and with our manifold transgressions we are also but as condemned criminals. God's mercies in Christ are our only refuge. "So far as you think of doing any thing, call it what you may, with a hope of being pardoned and justified for its sake, so far you reject the only way of salvation, (Rom. iii. 4, 5.) and have reason to expect your portion with unbelievers." We must fix every hope on the atonement of Christ; then we shall discern the Lord's body, we shall eat his flesh, and drink his blood, and be in a prepared state of mind duly to use this ordinance.

We should further inquire as to our GRATITUDE. Have we a thankful remembrance of the death of our gracious Redeemer? If your mind is awakened to a due sense of your sinfulness and ruin, and enlightened with a knowledge of the way of salvation by Christ Jesus, then the next point of inquiry should be—*Is the love of God shed abroad in my heart by the Holy Ghost?* Am I ever ready to say, *Thanks be unto God for his unspeakable gift?* Contemplate for a moment that wonderful love of God, which, before time began, planned the way of salvation. Contemplate the way in which this love was manifested. The eternal Word, the Lord of glory, *was made flesh, and dwelt among* us. Consider how much it cost. God *spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all.* Contemplate the amazing benefits, pardon, peace, salvation, and eternal life, which thereby come to us; and then you may better judge what a thankful remembrance we ought to have. Ask yourself, then, 'Have these things deeply affected my heart? Have they kindled within me any warm emotions of gratitude, and called forth my devout thanksgiving?' If we love Christ, we shall think much of Christ. Those things concerning which our thoughts most abound, mark the state of the soul. Dr. Owen remarks, "Let a man profess what he will, if his thoughts are generally conversant about worldly and sensual things, he has an earthly and worldly mind: as he thinks, so he is; there is the image and likeness of the soul. If then we are affected with the love of Christ, it will beget in our souls many thoughts of Christ, in our lying down and in our rising up, in our beds, in our ways, on our occasions, as well as in ordinances. If indeed our hearts are

affected with the love of Christ, our thoughts of Christ will abound, and those thoughts will work again on our affections, and conform us more and more to the image of Christ." Inquire thus, if gratitude for the gift and love of a dying Saviour be a permanent and prevailing feeling in your mind, inducing you to forsake those things which would displease God, and zealously to seek his glory. Is it in this view you go to his table, saying with David, *I will come into thy house in the multitude of thy mercies?*

There is yet another very important subject of inquiry—What is your LOVE TO MAN? Are you in charity with all men? The greatest knowledge, a faith that could work miracles, and the most excellent gifts, are all vain without charity. This love to man is of such importance, that our Lord gives an express rule equally applicable here as to the Jewish sacrifices, and doubtless principally designed for the use of the Christian church—*If thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath aught against thee,* leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way, first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift.* Matt. v. 23, 24. An unforgiving temper, and a prevailing spirit of selfishness, a spirit of enmity and ill-will, even towards our worst enemies, are utterly unsuitable with this solemn occasion, or with the due worship of Almighty God. Inquire, then, whether you really love your

* Augustine notices a point here, which, as it may relieve the anxiety of a timid mind, I gladly insert. He says, "The precept is, if we call to mind that our brother has aught against us; that is, if we have any way injured him, for then it is that he has something against us. For if he have injured us, then we have something against him; in which case there is no occasion to go to him for reconcilement. You would not ask pardon of the man who has done you an injury. It is sufficient that you forgive him as you desire forgiveness."

fellow men, and what proofs you have of this love. Do you make sacrifices of your own ease, and will, and comforts, for them? Are you kind and tender-hearted, ready to forgive, and abounding in works of mercy? Are you liberal towards the destitute, gentle towards the froward, forbearing towards the impatient and irritating, and kind and loving to your enemies? Are you pitying and praying for the ungodly? Are you delighting in and doing good to the pious? In short, you should inquire—Have I that charity *which suffereth long and is kind, beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things?*

A close examination on these subjects is calculated to produce that humble mind and contrite spirit, and that sense of sinfulness and weakness which are most especially adapted to the advantageous reception of the Lord's Supper. Who can question himself on all these points, without seeing his own sinfulness? But be not too much discouraged by such a review; remember, the real desire after the grace of God is a sign that you have a measure of that grace already.

Some on the other hand rely on their examination rather than on Christ, and think that they have made their peace with God, because they have gone over some questions of self-examination, and some prayers, and have made some good resolutions. If these form the foundation of your hopes, they lead you from dependence on the Saviour, and merely delude and deceive your soul. Self-examination should bring you to Christ, and not take you off from him. He only by his Spirit gives those graces and dispositions, in which faithful examination will shew you to be so greatly deficient.

After having gone through this examination, the all-important questions will naturally arise, Am I am a child of God, or not? Am I going to heaven, or not? Have I the root of the matter in me? No questions can be of greater moment; and you ought to have some hope that you can satisfactorily answer them before you go to the table of the Lord. We will add here, therefore, some scriptural marks, that you may know your own character. You cannot, indeed, know by any distinct revelation, that you are among his chosen people; but he has given in his word various descriptions of their graces; and when the Holy Spirit has wrought these graces in our hearts, we may, He bearing witness with our spirit, have a full assurance of hope, that since we possess them, we are partakers of his salvation.

1. A Christian has received the Holy Spirit. *If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.* Rom. viii. 9.

2. A Christian has experienced a great change within. *Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.* John iii. 3.

3. A Christian has a teachable child-like spirit. *Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.* Matt. xviii. 3.

4. A Christian has a distinct and transforming view, through Christ, of the infinite excellence of God. *We all, with open face, beholding, as in a glass, the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image, from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.* 2 Cor. iii. 18.

5. A Christian has a deep sense of his sins. *Blessed are the poor in Spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.* Matt. v. 3. *I abhor myself.* Job xlii. 6.

6. A Christian trusts in Jesus Christ. *Whosoever believeth in Him shall not perish, but have everlasting life.* John iii. 16.

7. A Christian loves Jesus Christ. *If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be Anathema Maranatha.* 1 Cor. xvi. 22.

8. A Christian loves all the children of God. *We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren.* 1 John iii. 14.

9. A Christian looks to God as his father. *Ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear, but ye have received the spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father.* Rom. viii. 15.

10. A Christian loves the word of God. *His delight is in the law of the Lord.* Psalm i. 2.

11. A Christian prays much to the Saviour. *Whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.* Rom. x. 13.

12. A Christian is made holy and devoted to God. *Holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord.* Heb. xii. 14.

13. A Christian counts all he has done nothing worth in comparison of Christ. *I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord.* Phil. iii. 8.

Supposing the reader to have carefully gone through these marks, and to come to the affecting conclusion, I have not these graces! I am not a child of God! Be it so: still it is better to know the worst, for yet there is hope. You should consider—How vast the mercy that has hitherto spared you! How sweet the invitation that now sounds in your ears, *Whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely!* How great the encouragement, *Him that*

cometh unto me, I will in no wise cast out! How important the duty now, *Seek ye the Lord while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near.* All your sin and guilt, so far from being a reason why you should not go to Christ, are the very strongest reason why you should, just as you are, apply to him without delay, and seek salvation only in his name. Oh, at length, *Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world.*

Supposing you are able to come to no decisive conclusion, and are perplexed and doubtful. Again we direct you to the Saviour. Stay not for ever questioning whether you are his, or have really sought him: now seek him: go to him now for mercy and grace, if you have never gone before. He is a merciful, compassionate, and faithful High Priest. He will give you his Holy Spirit. The work of your salvation is of immense moment. Lose no time. Trifle not. *Give diligence to make your calling and election sure.*

Once more, supposing you have a *good hope through grace*, still let your examination lead you more simply to Jesus, that he may *multiply grace, mercy, and peace unto you.*

MEDITATION is both an important and profitable part of preparation. We should think much, and deeply, if we would derive much benefit. Our chief attention should be directed to the sufferings of our Saviour. If those portions of scripture which describe his sufferings, as the 22d Psalm, the 53d of Isaiah, and the latter chapters in the four gospels, are carefully perused, and dwelt on in patient and deliberate meditation, our minds will, with God's blessing, receive some holy impressions, some con-

victions of the evil of sin, and some lively sense of the love of Christ. Dr. Owen advises, that our meditation should be regulated by our peculiar present condition. Suppose, for instance, the soul is pressed with a sense of the guilt of any sin, or of many sins, let your preparatory meditation be fixed on the grace of God and the love of Jesus Christ, as proved to the very utmost degree by his death. This is suited to give relief to your mind. Do you lament that you have not a just feeling of the evil of sin? Let your meditation be principally directed to the great guilt sin as represented in the cross, and to the severity of God against it, as there manifested.*

Judge Hale found it a means of preventing wanderings, and of fixing his mind, to commit his meditations to writing; and there would doubtless be much advantage in putting down those thoughts which most affect your own heart.

But after all our efforts, let us ever bear in mind, that the true preparation of the heart is from God alone; earnest PRAYER is therefore both our privilege and our duty. All the gifts and qualifications which we need, come only from God; and he gives them, and ordinarily gives them only, to those whose hearts he inclines to seek them in prayer. The most earnest, and serious, and full our prayers are, the greater blessings we are likely to receive.

Perhaps to knowledge, self-examination, meditation, and prayer, may be added EXPECTATION, or a looking and hoping for the blessing connected with this ordinance. In general, in proportion as we expect the fulfilment of God's promises, so shall we

* Some helps to meditation are added in subsequent chapters.

receive, in God's good time and way. We should inquire, What may I hope to receive? We should expect a more lively manifestation of the divine presence, a more sensible communion with him, an increase of the hope of his glory, and the like. Before our Lord healed the two blind men, he required them to believe in his ability to do so, and *then touched he their eyes, saying, According to your faith be it unto you.*

The discharge of this duty of preparation requires some STATED TIME. Mr. Earle remarks, "It concerns me to prepare, that I may be a welcome guest, and a worthy receiver. To prepare! though the expression be short, it is comprehensive, and I shall find it implies more work than can be crowded into a little time, or done with a little pains. Let me therefore redeem some time from my business, or at least from my pleasures, before the week be far advanced, that unforeseen occurrences may not deprive me of an opportunity to dress my soul for the glorious solemnity, and put me upon the unhappy plunge of missing the feast, or wanting the wedding garment." There is much truth in these remarks; yet it may well be doubted, whether it be expedient to make so much of a given time for preparation, as to hinder Christians from that which was the primitive plan—frequent communion. Some have time at their command, others have not; and the period of time to be given to the duty of preparation will vary accordingly. But in general most persons might, were they in earnest, give some stated and uninterrupted time to this great work. It has been observed, "your profiting will for the most part be proportioned to the diligence with which you prepare. It

may also be remarked, that in all cases much time may be saved by watchfulness to improve opportunities. By edifying conversation, particularly in going to and returning from church, we may redeem time. Remember, our Saviour notices what passes in mutual discourses. *What manner of communications are these that ye have one to another as ye walk?*

Be not discouraged, as if you were to be perfect before you go; this very institution is designed as a help for your imperfections and weakness. "If we were perfect, we should not need it." Guard also against two opposite evils, self-righteous formality in preparation, and slothful self-indulgence in neglecting to prepare. As to self-righteous views of ourselves, it was a remark of Luther's, "Never are men more unfit than when they think themselves most fit, and best prepared for their duty; never more fit than when most humbled and ashamed, in the sense of their own unfitness." We must not rest on the exactness of our preparation, whatever it may have been, but come only in the name of Jesus. There is a tendency also in our minds, to be very careful not to sin before we receive the Lord's Supper, and afterwards to be too careless about sinning. Let us watch against this self-righteous spirit, while we foster and cherish those more serious and devout thoughts, and those greater longings after Christ and his blessings which we may experience at that time.

Seek to prepare in dependance on the grace of God, and as his appointed means for obtaining a blessing, and such a preparation will discover to you more of your sinful and lost condition; and thus the atonement of Christ, and the gift of his Holy Spirit, will be unspeakably precious to you, and you will

go to his table hungering and thirsting after righteousness. Then, in partaking of the memorials of his death, you will receive the pledges of his love, and the assurance of your interest in his great salvation. You will enjoy communion with him and his people, and probably gain some foretaste of those unspeakable pleasures which are at his right hand for evermore.

CHAPTER II.

HELPS FOR SELF-EXAMINATION, AND PRAYERS.

IN the preceding chapter, the subject of self-examination, as a part of preparation needful before the first reception of the Lord's Supper, has been already considered. But as self-examination is a duty of continual recurrence, we will endeavour to give some farther help to the constant performance of it, and show how it may be profitably varied.

Only let us first here give a caution that may be necessary lest self-examination should lead to self-righteousness. Heathen writers dwell much on the duty and importance of self-examination, and they having no clear light of the gospel without, might hence be led even too much to magnify inward self-inspection. The chief commands in the New Testament for self-examination (1 Cor. xi. 28; 2 Cor. xiii. 5.) occur in the epistles to a church in a low and divided, in a carnal and infantile state. (1 Cor. iii. 1, 2.) David's prayers that God would examine and prove him (Psalm xxvi. 2; cxxxix. 23, 24.) shew a higher state of grace than merely trying ourselves and looking within.

The Apostle's command to "examine whether we be in the faith," and whether Christ Jesus be in us, shews that this duty is chiefly important where the

work of grace is beginning. There is a danger of looking too much within, lest we be led into that fault pointed out, *They, measuring themselves by themselves, and comparing themselves among themselves, are not wise.* 2 Cor. x. 12. We need in truth, to look out of ourselves for our joy and comfort, for our motive and strength. Our blessedness is in Jesus, and we have rather to look away from other objects (*αφορωντες*) and look unto him, the Author and finisher of our faith, even for the very ends to be desired in self-examination; such as faith, humility, contrition, repentance, love, holiness, peace and joy; these, all these, are mainly attained by looking away from other objects to the Lord Jesus Christ.

Let not the reader mistake this remark and be ready to think less of so plainly commanded a duty, and that he may go slightly through it; but let him see its proper place, and not expect from it that which only comes from believing in a crucified, risen, returning, and reigning Redeemer.

Well would it be for Christians, if they were in the habit of close daily self-examination. It is not indeed easy, or perhaps practicable, for those engaged in all the bustle of business in large cities, to give much time to this work; but what Christian could not pause for a few moments before his evening prayer, look back on the past day, trace what has been the course of his thoughts, words, and actions: and so be better prepared for all the parts of prayer.*

* The following questions have been recommended for this purpose.

Questions for the Evening.

1. What mercies have I received this day; answers of prayer; deliverance from evil; common or remarkable blessings?

But before the reception of the Lord's Supper, the duty cannot, in ordinary cases, be neglected without the breach of a divine precept, *Let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread and drink of that cup.* A watch requires not only to be wound up daily, but at occasional intervals a particular looking into, to be cleaned and oiled afresh.

These general directions may with advantage be first attended to.

1. LET A FIXED TIME BE SET APART, before you receive the communion, FOR THIS DUTY. It is a

2. What sin have I committed? What duty omitted?
3. What have I done, endeavoured, or designed for the glory of God, or the good of my neighbours; or what opportunities have I neglected of promoting them?
4. With what success have I encountered those sins to which my circumstances or constitution most incline me; passion, sloth, impurity, intemperance, vanity, &c.
5. Have I been looking to Jesus as my righteousness, my strength, and my example?
6. How have I improved my time this day? Have I made any progress in religion? Have I thought of death and judgment? Have I walked with God?
7. Have I prayed, and how? Have I read the Scriptures, and how?
8. What mercy do I want for soul or body, myself, or my relations, that I may now ask it?
9. Have I remembered my promises made at the last sacrament, and how have I performed them?

Questions for the Morning.

1. Did I read and pray, meditate, and examine myself last night; and in what manner?
2. Did I think of God the last thing on lying down, and the first thing on rising up?
3. What sin have I committed in thought, word, or deed; and what duty has been omitted since the last evening?
4. What occasions may I probably have this day of serving God, and benefiting my neighbour?
5. To what temptations am I likely to be exposed?
6. What mercies have I received, and what blessings do I now need?
7. Is it my desire to live this day by the faith of the Son of God? Gal. ii. 20.

duty that cannot be discharged incidentally, or in a moment, nor without some self-denial and resolution. Something has already been said on this subject;[1] but with reference to that examination, which is always desirable when we from time to time receive the Lord's Supper, some further remarks may be made.

Dr. Owen gives the following sensible directions on this point; "Take care that the time to be spent in preparation, neither intrenches on the occasions of the outward man, nor on the weakness of the inward man. If it does, they will be too hard for us. There is a double direction in scripture; one is, *God will have mercy and not sacrifice.* When the observance of sacrifices sensibly intrenches on duties of mercy, God does not require it. The other is, *Bodily exercise profiteth little.* When we assign so long a time as wearies our spirits, and observe the time, because of the time, it is bodily exercise; and when the vigour of our spirits is gone, it is not a sacrifice in which God delights. Prudence is here required."

Yet, on the other hand, he remarks, "Let not the time allotted be so short, as to be unmeet for going through the duty effectually. Men may be ready to turn their private prayers into a few ejaculations, and going in and out of a room, may serve them for preparation for the most solemn ordinance. This has lost us the power, the glory, and the beauty of our profession, which are greatest and brightest when Christians are most exact in preparation for their duties. After particular sins and mercies, or before

1 See chap. i. part ii.

particular duties, we should also add a more solemn preparation."

It is impossible to give any rule as to the length of time that should be given. The obligations of persons vary with their situations and circumstances: but we apprehend even those most limited for time, might, by due efforts, even if the time were redeemed from sleep, (in which they would only copy the highest example, Luke vi. 12.) give at least an hour to this duty, on some day previous to that on which they receive the Lord's Supper. Those of more leisure might give several hours. Give such time as, consistently with your other duties, you can spare: but let the time in every case be so employed, not as a task but as a blessing: not merely as a requirement, but as a privilege and advantage. Indeed you may be assured, as the result of the experience of many, that the more close, and faithful, and diligent you are in self-examination, the more comfort and benefit you are likely in the result to receive.

But it may be asked, Is a man never to receive the Lord's Supper, without a minute and particular self-examination. We may distinguish between the younger Christian, in his first approach to this holy table, and the more advanced Christian, steadily persevering in the ways of God. In our early reception of the Lord's Supper, great care and attention in preparation is of peculiar importance and benefit. But an advanced Christian, who has known and loved the truth for many years, and gradually been growing in grace, has, to a certain degree, an habitual preparation. Should he unexpectedly find the Lord's Supper to be administered, we doubt not

he would receive it with much advantage, without any other than this habitual preparation of mind. Yet even to him, we are persuaded, it would be profitable to inquire into the course of his conduct since he last received; and to him the season of retirement and self-reflection, to which this ordinance calls us, is a matter of great and incalculable benefit.

Yet beware of formality and self-righteousness. The author cannot but fear that the general use of "The Week's Preparation," however well intended by those who published them, or those who read them, tends to build up a person in a fancied worthiness and righteousness of his own, which is supposed to fit him to receive those spiritual blessings which the gospel shows are freely given to the unworthy; or else tends to sink it into a mere formal act, without spirit, life, or benefit.*

A second general direction that may be useful is this, CONSIDER THE HOLY SCRIPTURES AS THE GREAT TEST BY WHICH YOU ARE TO TRY YOURSELF. They are the only true standard of self-examination; the touchstone which discovers at once the character of the metal. But as the sacred volume is far too large to be gone through at any particular time, we would recommend the following plan, which has been found useful. When you endeavour to ascertain if you repent of sin, read the 51st Psalm, and compare the state of your own views and feelings with those of

* The New Week's Preparation is defective and erroneous in its statement respecting the way of salvation, attributing to hearty repentance and sincere obedience, that title to everlasting life, which the Scriptures ascribe only to the unmerited grace of God in Christ Jesus, received through faith, the gift of God.

penitent David. When you examine whether you have a lively faith, read the 11th of Hebrews, and notice there the effects of true faith, and inquire how your faith influences you. When you try your state of mind as to a sense of God's mercy, read the 103rd Psalm, and compare your affections with those of the grateful Psalmist. When you would ascertain the state of your soul, as to its desires towards God, read with this view, Psalm 63, or 84. When you wish to learn your true character as to charity, read the 13th of the 1st of Corinthians, and thus discover your real state. The ten commandments, the 15th, 24th, 26th, 119th, and other Psalms, the beatitudes (Matt. v.) and the whole sermon on the mount, the first epistle of St. John, and many other parts of the scriptures, might be mentioned as peculiarly adapted to this purpose. By thus comparing your state with the most practical and spiritual parts of the word, and varying those parts from time to time, you try yourself by a perfect and infallible standard. Several specimens of questions for self-examination on this plan, are given in this chapter,.

It has also been found advantageous when reading practical books, such as Doddridge's Rise and Progress, Beveridge's Private Thoughts, Leighton's Works, Alleine's Alarm, Walker's Christian, Hall's Christian Laid Forth, and similar practical treatises, to make use of them as a means of self-examination, noting down what strikes your mind as displaying your true character before God. The sermons which you hear every Sunday, furnish you with another test by which to try yourself. A point of inquiry that may often advantageously occupy our attention, is our fidelity in our peculiar circumstances, and in

the discharge of relative duties. What does my situation require? What are my difficulties, temptations, and dangers? How do I fulfil my duty as parent or child, husband or wife, master or servant, minister or hearer, brother or sister, poor or rich, in public or in private? Here is a large and very important subject for profitable self-examination.

One more general direction may be added—CONDUCT THIS EXAMINATION IN THE SPIRIT OF PRAYER. If this be neglected, self-examination may only prove a means of delusion and danger to your immortal soul. We are all prone to think well of, and to justify ourselves.—*The heart is deceitful above all things*, and Satan is ingenious to suggest to our minds many excuses for our misconduct. We are prone also to think little of the evil of sin, and to refer to the false standard of what others are doing, rather than what the Bible requires. Sometimes also we are tempted to write hard and bitter things against ourselves. Self-examination under such influences may only tend to deceive us; to harden us; or to sink us into despair. It may thus fix us in our errors with increased strength. Fervent prayer is the true remedy for this. God who searches the heart, discovers its true character to those who pray to him to shew them to themselves. Observe how David prays—*Examine me, O Lord, and prove me; search me, and know my thoughts; look well if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.* Psalm xxvi. 2; cxxxix. 23, 24. It is the special office of the Holy Spirit, which is sent by Christ to his people, to convince them of sin. Without his aid, our self-examination is vain. Let us never then neglect to seek that aid.

The advantages of occasionally reducing to writing the results of this self-examination, are, that it more impresses your own mind at the time, and it may be easily referred to afterwards. Why should not the Christian find as much advantage in making from time to time an accurate estimate of the state of his heart, as a merchant does in keeping accounts of his gains and losses, and making an accurate estimate of the true state of his affairs. Having given these general directions, we will proceed to give more particular hints for helping in this important duty.

Let us always begin it with prayer.

A SHORT PRAYER BEFORE SELF-EXAMINATION.

Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, who art of purer eyes than to behold iniquity, who searchest the heart and triest the innermost thoughts, I beseech thee now to assist me in looking into my own heart, and my own life. Thy word testifies that my heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked; I beseech thee, then, to shew me to myself. Enable me to try myself by the standard of thy holy word, and by thy blessed Spirit discover to me the true state of my soul; give me repentance for all my past sins: lively faith in Jesus Christ, the only Saviour from sin; deep humility before thee, and such tempers and dispositions as are meet for those who assemble round the table of our gracious Redeemer. These things I ask for his name's sake.

Let us now proceed to compare our hearts and lives with God's holy law: the following forms of self-examination are added for this purpose.

SPECIMENS OF QUESTIONS FOR SELF-EXAMINATION.

No. I.—THE HOLY LAW OF GOD. Mark xii. 30, 31.

Do I love the Lord my God with all my heart, with all my mind, with all my soul, and with all my strength?

Do I know any thing of his glorious perfections, and the blessings which he has bestowed?
Do I desire his favour, and fear his displeasure above every thing?
With what feelings do I regard his word, his house, his day, his ordinances, his people?
Is my mind in general alienated from God, and forgetful of him?
Do I think much and frequently of him, and am I zealous for his glory?
Do I enjoy communion with him when I pray to him, or desire this?
Do I strive to become like him?
Are all the faculties of my soul engaged to render him affectionate, intelligent, sincere, and resolute service?

Do I love my neighbour as myself?

Do I know that all mankind are entitled to my benevolence and love?
Am I free from all malice, ill-will, and enmity, to every human being?
Do I forbear doing to them what I should dislike to have done to me, whether it be fraud, evil-speaking, contempt, or the like?
Do I injure no human being by dishonesty, and if I ever did, have I made restitution?
Am I actively desiring, and seeking the good of all around me, even as I desire and seek my own?
Is my love to others like that of Christ to me?
Do I love, not in word only, but in deed, and in truth?
What do I do for the relief of the needy and destitute?
Am I seeking the salvation of my fellow-creatures?
Have I such a knowledge of the law as to see that one failure exposes me to its penalty?
Has the law taught me my sinfulness, and as a schoolmaster led me to Christ?
And does the knowledge of Christ make me constantly endeavour to fulfil the law?

No. II.—THE GOSPEL. Romans i. 16, 17.

Have I deeply felt my corruption and guilt before God?
Have I seen my own helplessness as to salvation?
Do I know and believe that the gospel is the appointed and only and complete way of salvation?
Do I expect the aid of divine power in a cordial reception of it?
Am I so believing in Jesus as to rely on him as my Saviour?
Do I know that God accounts men righteous through faith in him?
Am I seeking righteousness in this way?
Is my life, as it regards spiritual things, not a life of sight and sense, but of faith?
Am I truly grateful to God for his great salvation?
Am I evidencing this by a care to please him in all things?

No. III.—REPENTANCE AND FAITH. Acts xx. 21.

Do I repent of my iniquities?

Am I acquainted with, and do I love the strictness of God's holy law?
Have I any knowledge of the divine purity, justice, and goodness?
Have these things led me to see my own exceeding sinfulness?
Have I in consequence felt grieved for sin?
Have I determined to forsake all sin, however dear to me, particularly my besetting sin, whether it be pride, envy, malice, covetousness, wronging my fellow-creatures, impurity, fear of man, or any other sin?*
Have I acknowledged my sinfulness before God?
Have I actually turned from my sins?

Do I believe in Jesus Christ as my only Saviour?

Have I seen my danger on account of sin?
Do I know what the Scriptures say of Christ as able to save?
Have I seen that he is full of grace and truth?
Do I rely on him for pardon, and for strength to serve him?
Do I make use of him, in all his offices, as Prophet, Priest, and King?

No. IV.—THE BEATITUDES. Matt. v. 3—12.

Am I poor in spirit?

Am I sensible of my lost and undone condition?
Do I feel that I am unable to help myself?
Am I acquainted with the workings of my own evil heart?
Do I think meanly of myself?
Am I humble and lowly in mind, affection, and conversation?

* These should be honestly searched out, and brought to view, with earnest prayer for grace and strength to renounce and resist them, whatever it may cost.

Do I mourn for sin?

Do I see what dreadful evil sin has produced?
Do I know that the wrath of God is denounced against all sin?
Does the suffering Saviour, crucified for sin, affect my heart with godly sorrow?
Am I grieved for my repeated trangressions?

Have I Christian meekness?

Do I contend with my proud and unholy tempers?
Am I patient under crosses, trials, and injuries, and willing to suffer reproach for Christ's sake?
Do I quietly submit to God's painful dispensations?
Do I endeavour to unite ardent zeal with patient meekness?

Do I hunger and thirst after righteousness?

Am I deeply sensible of my want of righteousness?
Do I earnestly desire to obtain that righteousness which is through the faith of Christ?
Do I supremely desire to be wholly free from the dominion, pollution, and power, as well as from the guilt of sin?

Am I merciful?

Have the miseries of others called forth compassion and efforts to relieve them?
Have I sought to find out the poor and the afflicted?
Have I manifested a merciful disposition towards all under me?

Am I pure in heart?

Do the sins of my heart grieve me?
Do I avoid all those occasions which I have found to be temptations to impurity?
Is my eye single, and my heart one for God?
Are all covetous, sensual, and sinful desires mortified?

Am I a peace-maker?

Is my own conduct such as not to excite contention and disputes, but to diffuse harmony and love?
Have I, as much as I could, promoted brotherly affection and union in my family?
Do I seek to unite together those that have disagreed?
Am I labouring to spread the Gospel of peace?

It suffereth long and is kind,
Envieth not,
Vaunteth not itself,
Is not puffed up,
Doth not behave itself unseemly,
Seeketh not its own,
Is not easily provoked,
Thinketh no evil,
Rejoiceth not in iniquity,
Rejoiceth in the truth,
Beareth all things,
Believeth all things,
Hopeth all things,
Endureth all things.

Is it my grief that I have so little of this spirit?
Is it my constant aim to possess more of this great gift that *never faileth*?
Am I seeking, cultivating, and praying for it?

No X.—CHRISTIAN MORALITY. Phil. iv. 8.

Do I think on the things that are true, honest, just, pure, lovely and of good report?
Do I see my obligations to regard them?
Do I endeavour more conscientiously and constantly to practise them?
And yet do I view myself as an unprofitable servant, and depend on Christ alone?

No. XI.—THE CHIEF MATTERS OF THE LAW. Matt. xxiii. 23.

Do I specially regard *judgment*, or justice, so as to wrong no one in any matter?
Do I cheerfully shew *mercy* in dealing with all my fellow-creatures, and particularly with the poor, and afflicted, and those dependent on me?
Are all my actions marked by *faith*, or fidelity and sincerity, both towards God and man?
Have I so attended to these things as to feel my sinfulness and short comings, and to fly to Christ for pardon and strength?

No. XII.—THE LORD'S PRAYER. Matt. vi. 9; or Luke xi. 2, &c.

Our Father.

Do I know that God is a reconciled Father, through the death of his Son?
Do I look up to God with filial confidence for instruction, provision, and protection?
Do I love him better than the dearest relations on earth?
Have I a brotherly affection to his people, as being children of one parent?
Do I regard all mankind as brethren?

Which art in heaven.

Do I stand in awe of his power and majesty, so as to reverence and obey him?

Have I a constant, or frequent recollection, that his eye is ever upon me?
Am I longing to be where he more immediately manifests himself?

Hallowed be thy name.

Is the promotion of his honour and glory the great object of my life?
Do I seek to know God more myself, and to diffuse his knowledge through the world?

Thy kingdom come.

Is the kingdom of righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost, established in my own heart?
Are the interests of this kingdom, and its progress among all people, zealously promoted by me?
Am I looking forward to the heavenly kingdom with hope and joy?

Thy will be done in earth as it is in heaven.

Do I rejoice in the unlimited government of God?
Do I strive to know and follow his revealed will, copying Jesus and his holy angels?
Have I cheerfully acquiesced in afflictions as coming from God?
Am I labouring that all may know and do his will, gladly assisting, according to my power, such institutions as have this object in view?

Give us this day our daily bread.

Do I receive all temporal and spiritual blessings as from God?
Am I delivered from anxiously looking after future provision; and do I gladly leave that to God?
Am I living by faith in a daily and simple dependance on God?

And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass against us.

Am I deeply sensible of my daily and manifold trespasses, and earnestly seeking forgiveness?
Do I rest on the only ground of hope of forgiveness—redemption through the blood of Christ?
Do I manifest the invariable temper of those forgiven—forgiveness of others?
Am I manifesting goodness to the evil, liberality to the needy, and charity to all?

And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.

Do I carfully avoid known occasions and places where I have fallen?
Am I so sensible of my own weakness as ever to watch and pray?
Do I remember that my whole life is a scene of trial and probation?
Do I desire deliverance from sin as the great evil, and from *every* sin?
Am I going forth in my own strength, or simply looking to God alone to help and deliver?

For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever and ever.

Do all my hopes of answers to prayer rest on the perfections of God?
Have I such a knowledge of Christ as to see that those perfections are engaged in my behalf?
Am I getting more knowledge of, and more confidence in, his sovereignty, his omnipotence, his excellency, and his eternity?

No. XIII.—RELATIVE DUTIES. Col. iii. 18—25; iv. 1; 1 Peter ii. 13—25: iii. 1—9; Eph. v. 21—33; vi. 1—9; Titus ii. 1—15; iii. 1, 2; Deut. i. 17.

Wives.

Do I submit to my husband as is fit in the Lord?
Is my adorning the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit?
Do I seek the spiritual welfare of my husband—to win him by my conversation to Christ?

Husbands.

Do I love my wife even as Christ loved the Church, and as my own body?
Am I ever bitter against her; or do I love, nourish, and cherish her as myself?

Children.

Do I obey my parents in all things for the Lord's sake?
Do I not only obey, but also honour my father and mother?

Parents.

Do I bring my children up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord?
Do I never give way to angry passions, provoking my children to wrath?

Servants.

Am I obedient unto my master with fear and trembling, in singleness of heart, as unto Christ?
Do I labour with eye-service, as a man pleaser, or as a servant of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart?
Do I seek to please my master well in all things—not answering again?
Do I shew all good fidelity, not purloining, and this to adorn the doctrine of Christ?

Masters.

Do I give unto my servants that which is just and equal, remembering my heavenly Master.
Do I seek their spiritual, as well as their temporal welfare?
Do I forbear threatening?

Subjects.

Do I honour the king? and obey magistrates?
Am I subject to principalities and powers, and ready to every good work?
Do I speak evil of no man, being no brawler, but gentle, and shewing all meekness to all men?

Rulers, or Magistrates.

Do I act without respect of persons, whether small or great?
Am I just, ruling in the fear of God?
Am I using the influence of my station for the advancement of godliness?

You will see from these specimens how the Bible, in all its fulness and variety, is adapted for a perpetually varied, interesting, and infallible test of our character. Any one particular set of questions, or list of sins and duties for self-examination, will in time become a mere matter of form, and cannot bring before us all those graces, tempers, and duties to which we are called in the sacred scriptures.

The EFFECT which our self-examination should have upon us, deserves consideration. Examination is in order to our conviction of sin on the points in

which we have failed, to our comfort in those which God has in his mercy enabled us to fulfil, and to the quickening us better to discharge our duties subsequently. We are not the better merely for asking ourselves questions: and we may be the worse if we put such a religious exercise in the place of Christ, the only Saviour. In those particulars in which you find yourself to be guilty, you should see fresh cause for humbling yourself before God, for eagerly applying to Christ, and simply relying on him, and for future watchfulness and prayer. In those particulars in which your heart does not condemn you, you will doubtless see fresh cause for gratitude to God who has preserved you, and for faith in him still to keep you.

THE CHRISTIAN SHOULD HAVE HIS HOPE STRENGTHENED. He should come, after self-examination, to a comfortable conclusion, *a good hope through grace*, that, with all his failings, he is a Christian, a child of God, and an inheritor of the kingdom of heaven. He may say, 'I know that I have experienced a change of heart; for my views, my feelings, and my affections, are quite different to what they once were. I hate sin. I desire holiness. I see an infinite magnitude in salvation, an infinite value in Christ. I love his word, his day, and his service, and would not give up my hope in him for all the world. These are views and feelings of which I once knew nothing.' The Christian may say, '*I know that I am passed from death unto life*, because I love the servants of Christ; in proportion as I see them to be his, I love them wherever they are, or whoever they be; and once I either despised, or cared nothing for them, or knew them not. The conversion of a soul to God fills me

with gladness. I find God drawing my heart to himself so that I desire his presence, and cannot be content with the means of grace without communion with him in them. He is my portion; and though it is now with me as I would it were, and I fall vastly short of what I ought to be, yet blessed be God for these marks of his grace. My views of happiness shew me I am his child. To be free from sin, and like God; to know, and love, and serve him perfectly—this is my view of happiness. Communion with him is my highest joy, a joy which far exceeds all the earthly pleasures I have ever experienced. These are not natural feelings, divine grace must have made the change.' Let the Christian, then, take the comfort which this view gives. It will fill him with gratitude and love; it will not lead him to pride, presumption, or a fancied superiority over others; but to self-abasement, tenderness, compassion, and unwearied benevolence.

But one important and great result should be, a firm purpose, by the grace of God, to amend what has been amiss. Such purposes should be made seriously, prudently, and sincerely; asking ourselves if we are likely to perform what we promise, and never intend in any circumstances, for any argument, or under any temptation, to yield to sin, and then in the conviction of our own weakness, we shall look more simply and entirely to Christ for strength, and doing so shall obtain his help, and be able to say, *I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.* Bishop Beveridge, speaking of Christians discharging this duty, says, "they must consider what sort of temptations they have been most subject to, and oftenest overcome by, and must resolve never

to give way to them any more, but to withstand them with all their might. They must consider what place, what company, what employment, what recreations, or other circumstances of their life, have exposed them most to such temptations, and have been the chief occasions of their falling into sin; and must resolve for the future to avoid and forsake them."

Nor let all this be counted a vain labour. A period will arrive when we shall review our whole life, and we may even now be quite assured that "those days and hours which were spent in prayer, in fasting, in examination of the heart, and the exercises of faith and repentance, will bring more true peace and comfort upon our death-bed, than all other times of our life besides:" seeing they, through the grace of the Holy Spirit, discovered to us our sinfulness and ruin, and thus we were led to Christ, the only sure guide and protector *through the valley of the shadow of death.*

The following Confession and Prayers may close our self-examination.

CONFESSION OF SINS AFTER SELF-EXAMINATION.

O Lord God Almighty, the Judge of all the earth, keeping covenant and mercy to them that love him, and to them that keep his commandments, have mercy upon me, a miserable sinner, coming back to thee in the name of Jesus Christ. My conscience accuses me of many transgressions, and much disobedience. If in any thing I have not greatly sinned, or have in a measure fulfilled thy will, this was owing to thy watchful providence, and to thy restraining

and quickening grace, and not to my goodness; this was thy work, and to thee alone be praise. But, O how unfaithful have I been to my engagements, and how often have I transgressed thy law, and been disobedient to thy holy will!

I desire especially to confess and bewail those sins for which my own heart more particularly condemns me.

[*Here enumerate those sins and omitted duties, which have been brought to your mind by self-examination.*]

And how much of my sinfulness is unknown to myself! But thou art acquainted with all my ways; O cleanse thou me from my secret faults, and from all my known transgressions. Wash me in that precious blood which cleanses from all sin. Give me grace to look to him who was pierced for my sins, and to mourn for them with that godly sorrow which works repentance unto salvation. O vouchsafe unto me a holy compunction of heart, a lively faith in Christ, and a sure hope of thy mercy through him. I beseech thee, grant that I may, with a pacified conscience, a believing and penitent heart, and a grateful and thankful spirit, commemorate my Saviour's death at his table. Hear me for his name's sake. Amen.

PRAYER FOR REPENTANCE.

O Thou, who by the right hand of the Father art exalted to be a Prince and a Saviour, to give repentance and forgiveness of sins: now, in this accepted time, I come to thee for those great blessings. My heart is hard and impenitent, and little affected by my many sins and thy great goodness; I beseech

thee take away the stony heart, and give me an heart of flesh. Vouchsafe unto me that broken and contrite spirit which the high and holy God will not despise. May thy sufferings, gracious Redeemer, touch and melt my soul. Let the goodness of God lead me to repentance. Never leave me to myself and my own perverse, wayward, and wandering heart. O blessed Jesus, now bring me back, by thy Holy Spirit, to thy heavenly Father and mine; and, returning to him, may I obtain his mercy, and find that he does abundantly pardon.

PRAYER FOR FAITH.

Almighty God, Father of mercies, from whom cometh every good and perfect gift, give unto me, I beseech thee, grace to believe on the name of thy dear Son Jesus Christ. Let me look to Jesus, dying for my sins, rising again for my justification, and pleading for me at thy right hand in heaven. I believe; Lord, help thou my unbelief! let me be strong in faith, giving glory to thee, and having a full persuasion that thou wilt perform all that thou hast promised. O help me to count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord. Enable me so to believe, that Christ may dwell in my heart; and I may supremely love thee, my God, and unfeignedly love all my fellow-creatures. Hear me, for Christ's sake.

PRAYER FOR GRATITUDE TOWARDS GOD.

O Lord, whose tender mercies are over all thy works, and who hast chosen thy people to show forth

thy praises, circumcise my heart to love thee, my God, with all my mind, and with all my soul. By thy Holy Spirit fill me with so lively a sense of thy love to me, as displayed in the death of thy Son, that I may ever so gratefully remember that inestimable benefit, as to love thee and cleave unto thee, abound in thanksgiving, and keep all thy commandments. This I ask for Jesus Christ's sake.

PRAYER FOR CHARITY TOWARDS MEN.

Merciful and gracious Lord, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, who alone canst change and enlarge my selfish and contracted heart, I pray thee to give me the most excellent gift of charity. May thy love to me be so shed abroad in my heart by the Holy Ghost, that I may be full of love to others, forgiving them, and loving them even as Christ loved me. Teach me, I pray thee, to love others. O Lord, make me to increase and abound in love towards my Christian brethren, and towards all men, for Jesus Christ's sake. Amen.

PRAYER BEFORE THE LORD'S SUPPER.

Almighty and most merciful God, who wilt be sanctified in them that come nigh thee, I beseech thee to prepare my heart for that solemn ordinance, in which I have such near access unto thee by Jesus Christ.

Give unto me, I pray thee, all needful and suitable graces and tempers, that in partaking of the bread and wine, according to the institution of my Lord and Saviour, and in remembrance of his death, I may truly have the communion of his body and blood.

I desire to see, and to feel, the plague of my own evil heart; and to come, weary and heavy-laden, under the burden of my many sins, to Jesus Christ, for pardon and relief. May I be enabled, in the celebration of this institution, to keep in view Jesus Christ, and him crucified. 'May I enjoy here not only a representation, but a rich participation also, of his dying love.' Give me a lively and vigorous faith in him, that I may entirely rely on his merits for acceptance with thee, and depend on him alone for the supply of all my spiritual wants. Bring all needful things to my remembrance, and keep from me those things that would distract and disturb my devotion.

Deliver me from the evil and danger of eating and drinking unworthily, that I may not bring down judgments instead of blessings. Put away far from me all ignorance, irreverence, and want of charity. Let me not be under the influence of a carnal, self-righteous, and worldly spirit: lest in any measure I become a sharer in the sin of those who are guilty of the body and blood of Christ.

Give me also, I pray thee, all the benefits which my Saviour did, by this institution, design to convey to his people. Teach me to discern therein the Lord's body, and vouchsafe to me a large measure of thy grace, that my remembrance of Christ may be serious and impressive, and may produce an increase of penitence, faith, gratitude and holy obedience. Make thyself known to me, O Jesus, in the breaking of bread. May the Holy Ghost produce in me a composed, tranquil, and devout spirit at thy table. I desire there, O heavenly Father, to celebrate the death of Christ, as a sacrifice taking away the sin of

the world, and the only foundation of every spiritual hope. I desire, while commemorating his death, to remember his risen glory, and to declare my expectation of his coming again to judge the world, and save his people. I pray that I may find his death made efficacious to the mortification of all my sins.

O that it may please thee that pardon, justification, peace with God, sanctification, the hope of eternal life, and all the blessings which Christ, by his death, hath obtained for us, may now be afresh conveyed and assured to me through faith in him. Give me a sweet sense of communion with all true believers, and of our common union to Christ, the head of his church, and our fellowship with him and with each other. Thus may love to Christ, and love to all the brethren, be greatly strengthened and increased among us. O may we all thus experience the Lord's Supper to be a refreshing means of grace, so that we may return from thy table "with our consciences quieted, our corruptions subdued, our graces increased, and our souls encouraged, with an enlarged heart to run the way of thy commandments."

Increase the number of faithful communicants throughout thy churches in all the world; and enlarge the borders of thy kingdom, till all the ends of the earth remember the Saviour's sufferings, and turn to the Lord, and worship before thee. This I ask, for his name's sake. Amen.

CHAPTER III.

MEDITATIONS PREPARATORY TO THE LORD'S SUPPER.

HAVING before noticed the importance of meditation, in preparing for the Lord's Supper,* we now proceed to give some practical help towards it. Most desirable it is that each person should endeavour to gain for himself a holy skill in this profitable duty, that of retiring from the world, and seriously contemplating spiritual subjects for his own edification. It is a great help to every other duty, and elevates the mind above the passing vanities of the world. If we are in the habit of practising this duty in secret, it will be more easy to be fulfilled at the sacred table. He that would obtain comfort from remembering his Saviour's death at church, must first meditate upon it in his closet.

A passage of Scripture, or some practical truth, will generally furnish you with abundant matter for your meditation. If you were often thus to employ your thoughts on sacred subjects, in the spirit of

* See chap. i. part ii.

prayer, you would doubtless find much benefit * from such a practice. The Lord's day particularly is a suitable season for this employment.

There are those who are able to fix their mind on a devout subject, and dwell upon it without any other help than a spiritual mind, knowledge of the Scriptures, a blessed habit of meditation, and the gracious influences of the Holy Spirit; and for them the following meditations may be needless; but there are many who are wholly unaccustomed to this duty, and who are glad to receive assistance from the reflections of others, and find that assistance, through the aid of the Spirit, a means of raising their hearts to God. For their use the following meditations are added, as suitable, preparatory to the Lord's Supper. They suppose the person who uses them to be sensible of his sinfulness, and seeking salvation through Jesus Christ, and are chiefly acts of repentance and faith. It is by no means designed that they should be all read over on one occasion of receiving, and much less constantly before every communion.

* For further directions, see Bishop Hall's Art of Divine Meditation, Watson's Christian on the Mount, and the latter part of Baxter's Saint's Rest. The communicant will find such books as the following well suited to assist him in this duty:—

Beart's Divine Breathings.
Hall's Contemplations.
Harrison's Topica Sacra.
Horneck's Crucified Jesus.
Mason's Communicant's Companion.
Orton's Sacramental Exercises.
Owen's Practical Treatises.
Rambach on Christ's Sufferings.
Shower's Sacramental Exercises.
Sound Doctrine.
Willison's Treatises.

PREPARATION.

Prov. xvi. 1. *The preparation of the heart in man—is from the Lord.*

O thou, the Father of lights, and the Giver of all wisdom, I would ever see and acknowledge, while I search into my heart, and endeavour to use every means of preparing for thy holy feast, that thou must give the blessing, or all is vain. Thou must open my darkened understanding, or I see not my sins. Thou must affect my heart, or I feel them not. Thou must give me faith, or I go not to Christ for relief, and believe not on him as my only hope. Thou must sanctify me by thy Spirit, or I remain impure and unholy. O my God, thou only art able to supply my wants, or satisfy my immortal spirit. I come then to thee. I would lie at the foot of the cross for mercy and salvation. Let him that now asks, have; and that now seeks, find; unto him that now knocketh, let the door be opened. Hear, help, and save me, O Lord, my Strength, and my Redeemer.

Haggai i. 5. *Consider your ways.*

What is my WAY OF READING THE BIBLE? Do I read it daily, morning and evening? Do I pray over it? Do I reflect upon it? Do I adopt it as my guide? Do I ever slight God's book for man's books; and do I rest in man's word rather than God's word! My soul feels here its carnal tendencies, and its many omissions and transgressions.

What is my WAY OF PRAYER? Is it constant—at

least morning and evening, if not noon-day also? Are *evening* devotions slightly and carelessly performed, and *morning* hurried over? Is the habit of prayer through the day gained? Is it a joy to pray? Do I thirst for the seasons of prayer? O my leanness! I can look only to that High Priest who *bears the iniquity of our holy things.* How little is there of communion with God. Frequently he is like an unknown guest. He who ought to be the Presiding Governor is neglected, and real intercourse with him is often almost cut off by my corruptions.

What are MY WAYS IN THE HOUSE OF GOD? The question makes me sigh. O the underplot of worldly concerns that is busily transacting within, while the divine worship seems, before man, to be celebrating. Where are all the deep sympathies of prayer amid the crowd of vain thoughts that oppress and choke each holy emotion? Blessed Jesus! my prayers are my sins: thy righteousness my only hope!

What ARE MY WAYS IN LIFE? Some are indeed religious and profitable; but even in them, and in all my ways, self-indulgence in its thousand varied forms, vanity with all its endeavours to set off self, and earthly-mindedness with all its plans of worldly advancement, taint my course and defile my life. *I have gone astray like a lost sheep; seek thy servant, for I do not forget thy commandments.*

O that walking with God, communion with Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, and delighting in him, may henceforth be *my way* all my days!

ACTS OF REPENTANCE.

Psalm xl. 12. *My iniquities have taken hold upon me—they are more than the hairs of my head.*

When tried by the only true standard, I am found wanting in every precept. If a duty be required, it is omitted, or imperfectly discharged; if a sin is described, the root of it at least is in me. But this is not all. I am guilty, without an adequate feeling of guilt. I am helpless, and yet not sufficiently conscious of my weakness.

When I look even at a single day, O what sins thickly crowd in every part. In the morning, what cold and distracted prayers! at meals, what love of self-indulgence! in conversation, what idle and vain words! in business, what self-seeking and what disregard of the glory of God! Sometimes, what ardour in earthly things; or at others, what sloth and negligence! In company, what worldly conformity, what lost opportunities of usefulness, what neglect of souls! in evening devotions, what sluggishness and drowsiness! in all, what forgetfulness of God!

O once crucified Lord! I would look on thee, and mourn. Here, in these sins, I see the nails that pierced thy sacred hands and feet! here is the spear that penetrated thy side; here the crown of thorns that tore thy sacred head! While looking at thy crucifixion, may I be taught to hate and forsake every sin.

Psalm xxv. 11. *For thy name's sake, O Lord, pardon mine iniquity, for it is great.*

Not only are my sins more than I can number, but their aggravations are very great. They have been committed after I have professed myself a follower of the only Saviour, and though I knew that the world would take advantage of my failings to blame my religion, and thus put him whom I serve to open shame. They have been committed wilfully, repeatedly, deliberately, and after solemn vows and prayers.

Gracious Father! what shall I say before thee? I would not extenuate nor cover my guilt, but freely acknowledge how deeply I have sinned. Neither dare I doubt of the extent of thy mercy; but O what, save the blood of thine only Son, could cleanse away such sins as mine, and that very blood shows me more the greatness of my guilt. If thou hadst been hard and severe, without mercy and without love, my sins had not then been so aggravated; but thou hast encompassed me with mercies, and I have forgotten, forsaken, and rebelled against him, whose very name is LOVE!

But I cast myself, holy Saviour, sinful as I am, on thy atonement. My only hope is in thy name. O that that promise may belong to me, *Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow: though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool.* Then shall I praise thee with joyful lips.

Psalm li. 4. *Against thee, thee only, have I sinned.*

However I may have offended against my fellow-creatures, my peculiar and aggravated offence, in all

that I have in any way done wrong is, that I have violated thy law, and been guilty of rebellion and ingratitude towards thee. My soul, think then on thy sins against thy God. Muse on them, in silent sorrow, till the stony heart within be broken and softened. Consider, the holy and perfect Jehovah has seen all thy secret thoughts, and words, and ways; the pure and spotless Redeemer has been dishonoured by thy inconsistencies; the blessed Spirit has been grieved and resisted by thy wilful indulgence of sin.

But, O God, according unto the multitude of thy tender mercies, blot out my transgressions. On thee I cast myself for pardon; to the mighty Redeemer I look for deliverance; and to the grace of the Holy Spirit for the renewal of a right mind.

Though I have grieved thy Spirit, Lord,
His help and comfort still afford;
And let a wretch come near thy throne
To plead the merit of thy Son.

Well may I style myself a miserable sinner! No other plea, nor hope, can I have, but in the merit of my Redeemer. Truly the heart knoweth its own bitterness—its own sinfulness. O may I, with all my soul and strength, return to God, seek his grace in his own ordinance, and, looking unto Jesus, be saved.

Deut. viii. 2.—*Thou shalt remember all the way which the Lord thy God led thee, these forty years, in the wilderness, to humble thee and to prove thee.*

I cannot but be humbled, I cannot but sigh from the bottom of my heart, when I look back on my past conduct and truly estimate it. Sin, that destructive

enemy, has ever lodged in my heart. That base and ruinous evil has ever had an oppressive influence over my actions. The lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life, ah! whither have they led me? they have brought me to rebel against my Creator and my Redeemer, and have debased me to the service of slavery and Satan! I have long groaned under this burden of sin, and shall I remain in this state? Alas! the root of this evil lies too deep, and is too widely spread, entirely to be eradicated while I remain in the body. But, hereafter, O blessed period! I hope for perfect freedom. In the mean time, much may be done. Let me not faint; but, in the strength of the Lord, renew my exertions, going to the precious fountain where polluted souls are washed and made clean, and blessing God for the opportunity now afforded of receiving strengthening grace at his table.

Heb. xii. 1. *The sin which doth so easily beset us.*

It sometimes appears as if not one sin, but many sins beset me. There is not only one evil spirit to be expelled; their *name is Legion, for they are many?*

Self-indulgence in ease, in appetite, in neglect of duties, continually assails me, and often I yield to the temptation. Thus have heavenly-mindedness, and the higher graces of the Christian, been weakened, or hindered.

Vain glory also besets me. I seek the approbation of man, without reference to God. I do good to be seen of men. Ah! how pleased am I to be thought good, or great, by my fellow-creatures, not considering how little they can know the real truth, and how

little their judgment avails before God. However in my purposes and desires I renounce this; in my life I am continually influenced by it. Through this I do not speak of religion, and through this I do speak of religion. It is astonishing to see how apt this is to mingle with all I do, or leave undone. It is a disease which infects the thoughts, words, and actions, of every day.

Lord, I want a meek, humble, and lowly heart. One caring not for the applause of man, but desiring above all things a good conscience, and thy favour. O that I may ever walk humbly with thee, my God, and receive my Saviour into a meek, submissive, and contrite heart.

Covetousness is another evil that works in my heart, in various ways. I seek worldly instead of spiritual riches, as if earthly things could make me happy without the presence, and love, and blessing of God. Deliver me from this idolatry!

Self-righteousness also mingles with all my doings. I fear I often fix my hopes more on duties than on Christ. I see if the Lord were to give me more holiness and love, I should be in danger still of building my hopes on grace received, and not thinking of the God of all grace. However evangelical in my sentiments, is it not manifest to me that I am in danger of, in some measure, still seeking to be justified by the law; that I dare not trust all with Christ—all on Christ? O the evil heart of unbelief!

Lord, I humble myself before thee, in the conviction of these my manifold sins, imploring pardon and healing, through the blood of Christ.

Job xxix. 2. *O that I were as in months past, as in the days when God preserved me!*

I feel often disposed, in times of despondency, on looking back on the first impressions of religion on my heart, to say, O that I could regain that sweet peace of mind which I once possessed, when I could lie down with a joyful hope that if it pleased God to call me out of this world, I might awaken in his glorious presence, among friendly angels, and the kind and loving spirits of just men made perfect. When God was always graciously present to my mind on awaking, and I thought I saw a father's tender love in every thing about me, and in every thing that arose; then all fears were removed. Death was not terrible; but rather viewed as a messenger of peace, gladly to be welcomed. The cares and troubles of this world were little thought of, and the chief care was to approve myself to God.

But careless walking with God, worldly engagements, and neglected means of grace, soon damp the holy flame of first life and zeal.

O may I hear my Saviour's admonition, and obey his direction, *Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love: remember from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do thy first works.* Quicken me again, blessed Saviour. Let thy death be so brought to my remembrance at thy table, that my soul may now again be strengthened, refreshed, and revived; yea, restored to more than first zeal and love.

1 Cor. xi. 31. *If we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged.*

I do indeed desire to come to thee, O my God, self-condemned and self-abased, acknowledging my many sins committed day by day against thee; and that I deserve thy wrath and displeasure. I do desire now to humble my soul before thee, not in words only, but in a deep conviction of heart, that I am verily guilty in thy sight.

According, then, to this thy faithful promise, O my God, judge me not. Deal not with me according to my sins; but let me be justified freely by thy grace, through the redemption of Christ. Give me grace, I pray thee, in a right spirit, now to commemorate that redemption through his blood on which all my hopes are founded.

Rom. vii. 18. *I know that in me, that is, in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing.*

I am in myself full of all sin; and the review of my heart, and of my life, of my character, and of my conduct, in all the varied relations of life, is indeed very humbling and abasing. I cannot but feel, on a close inspection, that the very best things which I have ever done, through the intermingling of sin in every part, would for ever condemn me.

If I look within, there is a traitor there—a vile, carnal, worldly, impure heart, that soils every grace, and taints every offering: inward sin obscures the

divine light, withers my comforts, and depresses and deadens all my spiritual energies.

If I look without,—on the discharge of relative duties, all those to whom I stand related seem to suffer loss by my indolence and negligence. My omissions of duty, how many! my unfaithfulness, how great! O how little anxiety to glorify God, by a steady and consistent fulfilment of self-denying, daily obligations!

And who can tell the evil of one sin, all its abominations and exceeding sinfulness, before the Holy God.

Nothing can meet my wants, but Christ and his free and great salvation. Blessed be God, there is a Saviour. To him I cling: on him I rest: in him I joy. In him, God is my reconciled Father; and drawn by his Spirit to hate sin, and love holiness, I feel the spirit of adoption, and I cry, "Abba Father." *Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us!*

O Lord, let thy love at length produce fervent and inflamed love to thee: love which leads to self-denial, to patient working, to a willingness to endure reproach and suffering for Christ's sake: love which will make me ashamed, and grieved, and humbled, under the conviction of all my coldness and ingratitude to Him who died for me.

Lord, help me to discharge my varied duties. Pardoning all my past omissions, give me a sweet sense of thy forgiving love; and, O quicken, excite, and strengthen my soul at length patiently to take up the cross, and steadily and perseveringly to labour for thee. Let me be thy *workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works.*

2 Tim. ii. 12. *If we suffer, we shall also reign with him.*

O Jesus, how much didst thou choose to suffer, and readily suffer for me. What losses, what scorn, what poverty, what pain, what drops of blood, what agony, what a death! May I *know thee* and *the power of thy resurrection, and the fellowship of thy sufferings.*

O my soul, the grand proof that thou art doing the will of God, is not indefatigable industry, active zeal, doing many things that the world or the church commends. It is rather here: Dost thou take up self-denying duties, and go through them steadily in their season, as well as those that are more pleasant and easy to thee? Dost thou take up spending, losing, and wasting duties, in which money, health, toil, and strength are required, as well as gainful and profitable duties; going through the rugged and thorny ground, as well as along the plain path, when thy way to Zion demands the effort? Dost thou take up reproached and despised duties, confessing Christ before the ungodly, doing the work that brings obloquy, as well as the work that brings commendation?

Now here I have to return many a painful negative. O for grace from thy fulness, Lord Jesus, wisely and patiently, honestly and uprightly, to take up all the suffering duties that thou my Redeemer bringest before me, and callest me to. Let me not flinch and turn aside. Thou art a wise, a mighty, and a kind Master; may I be a faithful servant, and set my whole heart on this great point, hearing at the

last from thee, *Well done, good and faithful servant, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord.*

Blessed Jesus, thou art my hope, my righteousness, and my strength. O let me contemplate thee, till thy Spirit make me like Thyself: let me day by day hear thy voice, and *follow the Lamb wheresoever he goeth.*

And that I may thus suffer with thee, O help me to realize, by lively faith, the glory to come, *the new heavens and the new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness;* reigning with Christ, wearing *the crown of life*, sitting with him on his throne. May this joy be so set before me, that I may willingly, like Jesus, endure the present cross. Amen. Amen.

Solomon's Song, v. 1. *Eat, O friends; drink, yea drink abundantly, O beloved.*

May my God give me spiritual hunger and thirst for this spiritual feast; that feeling my great necessities, I may earnestly long for Christ and his salvation. And O that the holy table to which I am going may be richly furnished by the Master of the feast! May he grace it with his own presence, and abundantly bless the provision! By this feast may the needy soul be satisfied, the hard heart softened, the cold affections warmed, the straitened heart enlarged, the dim eye enlightened, the wandering mind fixed, and the doubting soul resolved. O that it may prove death to my sins, life to my soul, poison to my lusts, and strength to my graces. Grant that in receiving the bread and wine, I may be enabled to receive Christ Jesus into my heart; and may thereby get an earnest of, and a valid and an unquestionable

title to the everlasting inheritance, sealed and confirmed to me. Lord, manifest thyself to me. *Bring me into the banqueting house, and let thy banner over me be love.* Grace thine own ordinance, and beautify the assembly of thy people with thy presence. Put the wedding-garment on the guests: let thy Spirit rest upon them, let thy power be present to heal them, and thy glory fill the temple.*

ACTS OF FAITH.

Psalm xxxi. 19. *O how great is thy goodness.*

The love of God has indeed abounded towards me in innumerable ways, both in temporal comforts and spiritual privileges. But especially am I indebted to his long-suffering and long-sparing mercy, that I have not been cut off in the midst of my sins: that the fountain opened for sin and uncleanness is yet flowing, yet accessible, and that for me; the bread of life is yet tendered to me; the means of grace and the hope of glory are yet continued. There is still a way of access to the throne of grace, and the sure mercies of Christ may yet be obtained. Through the same goodness, I have another opportunity of approaching his mercy-seat, and seeking an interest in his redemption. Others have been called to the eternal world to render in their solemn account, and I have been spared a little longer to recover my strength. I will go, then, and cast myself under the wings of the Sun of Righteousness. I will take refuge in his name, and now seek his salvation.

* Altered from Wilson's Meditations.

Psalm xlii. 11. *Why art thou cast down, O my soul?*

My sins are indeed many, and grievous; but shall I spend all my time in dwelling only on them and shall I thus forget my Redeemer? Know I not that Jesus is able and willing to deliver me from this state? They that be whole need not a physician, but they that are sick; but I, being sick, even from the crown of the head to the sole of the foot, so much so as not to be sensible of the greatness of the disease, and sometimes to have lost the desire of being healed,—I have infinite need of the Divine Physician.

O heavenly Saviour, thou that art able and willing to save all those who come unto thee, have compassion upon me. I have as much need of thy grace for my salvation as the vilest publican and sinner: without that grace I perish for ever. Thou didst not reject them; O reject not me. My disease is as bad as the worst leprosy. *If thou wilt, thou canst make me clean.* Blinded eyes, deaf ears, crippled limbs, helpless sickness, and a dead corpse, are true pictures of my spiritual state. I come as they of old came—*Jesus, thou Son of David, have mercy on me! Jesus, Lamb of God, that taketh away the sin of the world, have mercy on me! Speak the word only and thy servant shall be healed.*

Psalm lxi. 2. *When my heart is overwhelmed, lead me to the rock that is higher than I.*

I should have perished in my sins, but for redeeming mercy and love. Blessed be God for Jesus the rock of my salvation. This rock it is that defends me from the justly-merited and stormy billows of

divine wrath. The fury of the tempest, that dreadful vengeance which would for ever have overwhelmed me, did he encounter, that I might be safe. Now, sheltered by this rock, though I may hear the roaring and dashing of that terrible sea, which, if unprotected, would have swept me away into endless ruin, yet am I entirely safe; not a wave shall come near me. Oh! in every trying hour, lead me to this rock, that Jesus may ever be my *hiding-place* and my *covert*. Here only am I secure. He is unchangeable and immoveable; *the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever.*

2 Cor. v. 21. *He hath made him to be sin for us.*

The cross of Christ shews me the evil of sin in the strongest light. The punishment of fallen angels, the deluge, the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, disease and death, and the eternal punishment of hell, tell me the evil of sin very strongly, but the cross of Christ yet more. "To see the SON OF GOD praying, crying, trembling, bleeding, dying; God hiding his face from him; the earth trembling under him; the sun veiled, the rocks rent, and darkness all around him; how can we but, (when we know that this was in consequence of man's transgression,) cry out,—Did sin do all this? Did sin nail HIM, whose titles are "The Mighty God," "The Everlasting Father," "The Prince of Peace," to the accursed tree? O, who can estimate the demerit of sin, its high provocations, its exceeding sinfulness? Here then, let me take a view of sin. If others view its temporary pleasures and momentary advantages, let me estimate its incalculable mass of evil, as viewed in the cross of Christ, as manifested in his being made sin for us.

EVIDENCES OF FAITH.

2 Cor. xiii. 5. *Examine yourselves whether ye be in the faith.*

On the review of my state before God, what says my conscience? will God acquit or condemn me? If I am to be judged only by his holy law, I am utterly condemned. I have transgressed every precept. I am condemned every hour, and am most justly sentenced to everlasting destruction. But I trust I am *not under the law, but under grace;* and that Christ hath borne the punishment of my sins. I know that he came into the world to save sinners, and I feel that I am a sinner. I trust also that his Spirit has taught me to mourn for sin, and to fly to Christ for refuge. Have I not often, in my secret retirements, cast myself entirely on God's mercy in Christ Jesus? Have I not laid claim to, and pleaded his precious promises! Surely, I have earnestly asked for spiritual blessings, and He that cannot lie has promised that I shall receive. I think I see some marks of a change of heart, and some appearances of the fruit of the Spirit. It is my desire that my thoughts may be spiritual and holy. I seek God in secret, and I do not allow of any known sin. These evidences (in much imperfection as they are in me) strengthen my hope; but yet I would rest every expectation, both for pardon and acceptance, for justification and sanctification, only on Christ my Lord.

Psalm xvi. 5. *The Lord is the portion of my inheritance and of my cup; thou maintainest my lot.*

Where a man's treasure is, there is his heart. Is then the Lord ever in my heart? He who died for me ought to be constantly in all my thoughts. What do I count then the chief joy of heaven? Is it not that there I shall be free from fears and doubts about my state, and for ever behold and praise my God? What do I count the chief joy on earth? Is it not the presence of the Lord in prayer? When in my devotions, or in reading the scriptures, or singing psalms, I am enabled to call God Father; surely, nothing is more refreshing to my heart than the manifestation of the Divine Presence. Is not that conversation the pleasantest in which, with a devoted fellow-Christian, I can converse of the value of Jesus and of his free love, and in which we can mutually stir up each other to live more to his glory? Can any thing yield me hearty pleasure when the Lord is absent? or are any ways pleasant and satisfactory which I think that he would not approve?

Am I not building wholly on the Lord for salvation? Indeed, this is my aim: for I see myself lost and undone, ruined and helpless. I see Christ to be as the pearl of great price, and would gladly part with all for him; but still there are many workings of self-righteousness, and much looking at duties as a ground of hope, and refusing to rejoice in Christ, till I see myself altogether holy and pure.

But is the Lord my portion? How can this be, when my heart is so full of the world?—when my prayers are often with so little heart and life; so

wandering, and so distracted? Yes! the Lord is my portion—these things are my grief and burden, and I look to him for strength against them.

But after all, how little do I prize the Lord! what a want of close walking with him! This again brings me to the foot of the cross. I can only glory in Christ crucified; and there I can and do glory.

O maintain thou my lot, for I *have a goodly heritage, and the lines are fallen unto me in pleasant places.*

1 Peter i. 7. *That the trial of your faith being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise, and honour, and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ.*

"Our faith in God's providence is then greatest when we dare cast ourselves on his care, even when to outward appearances he seemeth not at all to care for us: when we can so look on our miseries that we can withal look through them. Admirable is that faith which can with Israel see the land of promise through a sea, a persecution, a wilderness; through whole armies of the sons of Anak; which can with Abraham, see a posterity like the stars of heaven through a dead womb, a bleeding sword, a sacrificed son; which can with Job see a Redeemer, a resurrection, a restitution, through the dunghill and the potsherd, through ulcers and botches, through the violence of heaven and of men, through the discomforts of friends, the temptations of a wife, and the malice of Satan; which can with Stephen see Christ in heaven through a whole tempest and cloud of stones; which can with the poor Syrophenician

woman, see Christ's compassion through the odious name of a dog; which can in every Egypt see an Exodus, in every Red Sea a passage, in every fiery furnace an angel of light, in every den of lions a lion of Judah, in every temptation a door of escape, in every grave an *arise and sing.*" BP. REYNOLDS.

2 Peter iii. 18. *Grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.*

Month after month I have to come as a poor sinner to the Lord's table; and if asked, Do you not find yourself more holy and more heavenly-minded, more dead to the world, and more devoted to God, what could be my reply? I do believe these precious means of grace keep alive and maintain, and I would fain hope, also advance religion in my soul; but I seem every time to see myself worse and worse. I see more of the depravity of my evil heart; more of the amazing evil and extent of my sinfulness; more of my lost and ruined state in myself: and more of my infinite, of my daily, of my hourly need of a Divine Saviour. I see, more clearly than ever, that it is only the continually restraining and strengthening grace of God that ever made me, or still makes me, at all to differ from others. There are two depths of which I seem never to have reached either the bottom or the shore—my sinfulness, and God's grace in Jesus Christ.

O Lord, I want great grace and infinite mercy, even such as is discovered in the gift and the death of thy dear Son, for my spiritual need. May I now, in waiting on the Lord, find my strength renewed as the eagle's; so that I may run, and not be weary; and walk, and not faint; even for Christ's sake.

ACTS OF CHARITY.

Phil. ii. 4. *Look not every man on his own things; but every man also on the things of others.*

Selfishness has, alas! a continual prevalence in my heart; but I desire, holy Father, now to be filled with thy holy Spirit, that my heart may be enlarged with love to all mankind; I would now think of, and now pray for, all my fellow-creatures.

Enable me to love, wisely and constantly, my own family, bearing with their infirmities, and not offending or stumbling them by my own; praying for them, and seeking especially their spiritual welfare.

I desire to love, and oh! teach me to love my neighbour as myself, ever doing to him as I would that he should do to me.

I do, from my heart, forgive every one that has trespassed against me. I beseech thee to bless those that have hated, or injured me. Forgive them, and give them every spiritual good. And bless those whom I may in any way have injured, doing away by thy mercy the wrong I may have done them, and giving them grace to forgive me.

Bless my king; all in authority; all bishops, priests, and deacons; thy whole church; my country, with all ranks and degrees of men in it, high and low, rich and poor, young and old, and the whole world. Send the light of thy gospel to every land, and give unto all thy Holy Spirit. O grant that the doctrines of a crucified Saviour may be proclaimed in every tongue, till all remember his death in faith and in penitence, and ardent love fill every bosom.

CHAPTER IV.

HINTS FOR THE REGULATION AND EMPLOYMENT OF THE MIND DURING THE COMMUNION SERVICE.

THE Communion Service of the Church of England, with remarks upon it, and suitable meditations, will be given in chap. v, vi, and vii; the object in this chapter is, to assist the communicant in regulating the general state of his mind, and improving the leisure moments which he will have while others are receiving the sacred elements.

A devout attendance on the previous services, public worship, singing the praises of God, and hearing his gospel, are peculiarly calculated to prepare us for the more solemn act of devotion which succeeds.

An interval of time, while those who do not intend to partake of the Lord's Supper are leaving the church, will allow you a favourable opportunity for collecting your thoughts, and offering up a short prayer to God for his presence, help, and blessing.

During the succeeding service, endeavour to maintain a COMPOSED AND TRANQUIL SPIRIT. Some are so agitated by the importance of the service as to

lose calmness and self-possession; but let us remember, that we are going to a Father's table; and let us endeavour to go with freedom and cheerfulness, as well as with seriousness and devotion.

REALIZE, as much as practicable, THE DIVINE PRESENCE. It is a solemn service in which you are engaged. God is peculiarly present. You are about, as it were, *entering into the holiest*, but it is *by the blood of Jesus*. Heb. x. 19. Receiving unworthily is both sinful and dangerous; *but this man receiveth sinners and eateth with them*. With David, then, pray—*Examine me, O Lord, and prove me; try my reins and my heart. See if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting:* and with David also say, *O send out thy light and thy truth; let them bring me unto thy tabernacles. Then will I go unto the altar of God, unto God my exceeding joy.* Psalm xliii. 3, 4.

The following hints, in the way of actual direction, may assist in shewing you how the time may be most profitably employed while others are communicating, and before or after you yourself have communicated. But it is allowed that there is some danger, lest we should overload the mind of the communicant, and distract rather than help him. Be not then anxious minutely to attend to the whole of them, each time that you communicate. Some may serve to help you at one time, and some at another. You will find it probably more useful, rather to dwell on one or two points, than to be too particular in attempting to attend to them all at one time.

HUMBLE YOURSELF BEFORE GOD. The nearer access we have to God, the more humble we should

be. When Isaiah saw the glory of the Lord, and heard of the song of the Seraphim—*Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory!* his own sinfulness rushed upon his mind, and his first expressions were—*Woe is me, for I am undone, because I am a man of unclean lips!* When the Centurion came to beseech Jesus in behalf of his afflicted servant, and Jesus promised to come and heal him, see how he humbles himself in the presence of such a visitor—*Lord! I am not worthy that thou shouldest come under my roof: but speak the word only, and my servant shall be healed.* These are expressions suitable for us at this table. True humiliation makes us welcome the atonement of Christ.

LET THERE BE ACTS OF FAITH IN CHRIST CRUCIFIED; such a faith as *worketh by love.* You are under that New Dispensation where there is remission of sins, and may therefore *have boldness to enter into the holiest, by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh.* Heb. x. 19, 20. Now you should be looking to the crucified Redeemer, with a gracious confidence, as the poor malefactor did, when that Redeemer hung on the cross; and saying to him,—*Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom.* Luke xxiii. 42. Look to him as those women did who followed him from Galilee, went after him weeping to the place of crucifixion, and came and stood by the cross, full of fidelity, tenderness, and love. Matt. xxvii. 55. Or again, as that disciple did *whom Jesus loved,* who waited on him in his last moments, and received his dying charge, and immediately and stedfastly fulfilled it. John xix. 25—27. Be not content short of that faith

which applies and appropriates to your own soul the benefit of the death of Christ.

MAKE KNOWN YOUR REQUESTS UNTO GOD. It is a favourable time for prayer. Pray, 1st. FOR YOURSELF. Sinners are now reconciled to God by the death of his Son. Consider, then, what it is you most need; and be particular in unbosoming yourself to your God, even as a child would to a kind and loving father. Pray that the service in which you are now engaged may be a means of grace to your own soul, so that you may receive all the blessings designed by this institution, and especially an increase of faith in Christ: a more simple and entire dependance on his death, as *an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savour.* Pray also, 2nd. FOR OTHERS that they may *obtain like precious faith with you, in the righteousness of God, even our Saviour Jesus Christ.* 2 Peter i. 1. Enlarge your petitions as the time will allow. Pray for your partners in life; if worldly and unconverted, wrestle with God for their conversion; if pious, pray that they may abound always in every good word and work. Parents, bring your dear children, as it were, one by one, and by name, before the Lord, and ask for each child a suitable blessing. Masters, pray for your servants. Pass on to the devout recollection of all your relatives and friends, and think especially of the peculiar circumstances of any of them, which may require peculiar aid from God. Pray for your minister, that while he dispenses to others, he may also richly partake of the bread of life, to the nourishing of his own soul; and for your fellow communicants, that as each partakes of the outward symbol, he may inwardly feed on Christ by

faith. Pray, too, for all Christians throughout the world. Intercede for all those who have wronged or injured you, striving to enter into the full meaning of our Lord's command, *Love your enemies.* Pray for Jews, Turks, infidels, and heretics; the death commemorated in the sacrament, is that of *a Lamb* to take away *the sins of the world.* Let then a communion-day be specially a day of intercession for all men, that God would *pour out his Spirit on all flesh.*

ENJOY COMMUNION WITH THE FATHER, THROUGH THE SON, AND BY THE SPIRIT. There is a realizing communion with God as a Father to us his adopted children; with Christ, our Lord, in his grace and tender compassion, and with the Holy Ghost in his teaching, sanctifying, and comforting work. When men lost the substance of the blessing of feeding by faith on Christ himself, they invented the Romish doctrine of transubstantiation; taking up the image of the truth, instead of the real blessing. Nothing can satisfy the soul but the real blessing; the actual enjoyment of communion with God, our Saviour, at his table.

PRAISE GOD FOR HIS MANIFOLD MERCIES. Surely the immense benefits which we are here commemorating should lead us to say, *Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me bless his holy name. Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits; who forgiveth all thy iniquities, who healeth all thy diseases, who redeemeth thy life from destruction, who crowneth thee with loving-kindness and tender mercies: who satisfieth thy mouth with good things, so that thy youth is renewed like the eagle's.* Never can we view redeeming love aright without a thankful and grateful heart. If Jesus has done so much for us, surely we

may well offer up the rapturous song of praise, *Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father, to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.*

GIVE UP YOURSELF TO THE SERVICE OF GOD. All we are, and all we have, are from him; and when such mercies are presented before us as the Lord's table exhibits, each should be constrained to *present himself* (freely and voluntarily offering ourselves) to be a *living sacrifice, holy and acceptable unto God.* Jesus has redeemed us from the death of sin, and eternal ruin; let us, then, *yield ourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and our members as instruments of righteousness unto God.* The Lord's Supper is one of the appointed ways in which God calls us, from time to time, to give up ourselves afresh to him. It is an ordinance in which *one shall say, I am the Lord's; and another shall call himself by the name of Jacob; and another shall subscribe with his hand unto the Lord, and surname himself by the name of Israel.* Isaiah xliv. 5.

MAKE HOLY RESOLUTIONS IN THE STRENGTH OF DIVINE GRACE. Now is the time to determine more firmly to strive against all sin, and more resolutely to fulfil all your duties. Deliberately, in the presence of God and his saints, now in your secret devotions, express your stedfast purpose to *have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather to reprove them;* and that, however assailed and tempted, you will, in the strength of Christ, and quickened by his death, be faithful unto him. Now is the time to decide upon and bind yourself to more enlarged charity. When Zaccheus was honoured

with the presence of our Lord under his own roof, he said, *Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give unto the poor, and if I have taken any thing from any man by false accusation, I restore him fourfold.* It was on this determination that he was gladdened by that cheering assurance, *This day is salvation come to this house, forasmuch as he also is a son of Abraham.* And when Christ dwells in our hearts by faith, we should be forming purposes and plans how we may most effectually lay ourselves out to him.

This is also a proper time for MEDITATION upon divine subjects. We shall endeavour, in a subsequent chapter, to furnish some helps in the discharge of this duty. Let us have ready some affecting passages of God's word relating to the love of God in Christ, and the Saviour's sufferings and death, and think on them till the Holy Spirit touch and inflame our hearts with some kindlings of love to God, and some breathings after him.

CHAPTER V.

ON THE COMMUNION SERVICE OF THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND.

THE nature of the Lord's Supper, and the whole of its design, are practically and devotionally brought before us, in our Communion Service. We are here also furnished with a test of those dispositions which are needful for a due reception of this ordinance. It has been well remarked, "Read over attentively the service of our church, and if you can join heartily and sincerely, with the spirit and with the understanding, in the prayers, the confession, and the thanksgiving that you find there, you are indeed meet to be a partaker of those holy mysteries."

It is hoped that the following observations on the Communion Service, may assist the devotions of the Church of England communicants.* We have an

* Several of these observations are taken from the Rev. J. Milner's Sermon on the Communion. The author has not entered into any critical remarks on the service. Those who wish to see it defended from objections may consult Wheatley, Nichols, and others, on the Common Prayer, and Hooker's Eccl. Polity, Book v. sect. 68. The Author's object has been to give a few practical and devotional remarks on the Service.

excellent *form of sound words*, which we shall do well to *hold fast:* (2 Tim. i. 13.) but we should ever remember, that there must be something besides the form of words, however admirable they may be, to communicate the life and feeling of devotion; even the life-giving Spirit of Jehovah. We may repeat the words with our lips, without any desire or feeling of the heart. God may have to say of us, as he did of Israel, *They have well said all that they have spoken, O that there were such an heart in them!*

The whole of the service may be considered as a public record of the most solemn and important transactions that can take place on earth, between the fallen spirit of man, accepting salvation by Jesus Christ, and *the God of the spirits of all flesh*, giving the pledge of that salvation by his ministers.

The service begins with the Lord's Prayer: well may we commence this solemn transaction with addressing God as a Father, and with petitions for the advancement of his glory, the gift of our daily bread, and the forgiveness of our own sins, with a profession to forgive all others sinning against us. These petitions will all bear an edifying reference to the important duty in which we are about to engage.

The affecting prayer that God would "cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of his Holy Spirit," is adapted to our fallen and impure state, unable of ourselves to think any thing aright, and yet hoping for the promised aid of the Holy Spirit. To pray that we may perfectly love God, is a suitable introduction to the ten commandments, which are next brought before us, love being the fulfilling of the law.

The compilers of our Liturgy, knowing that *by the*

law is the knowledge of sin, and that a penitent heart is most needful for a due reception of the Lord's Supper, have well placed at the commencement of this service, THE TEN COMMANDMENTS, containing a comprehensive summary of the holy law of God. We must not suppose that these precepts relate only to the outward act of sin; our Lord has shown us that they forbid that principle or love of sin, which leads to outward iniquity. When, for instance, it is said, *Thou shalt have none other gods but me*, it forbids our forgetfulness of God, and our love of the world; *if any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.* When it is said, *Thou shalt do no murder*, angry thoughts, and malice, and revenge are forbidden, as well as murder. When we are told, *Thou shalt not commit adultery*, impure thoughts are equally forbidden. This manifestly is the obedience which the Lord of all requires. Matt. v. 21, 22, 27, 28. Hence you observe, that after every command the congregation are directed to say, "Lord have mercy on us;" hereby, as it is said in the rubric, asking God mercy for their transgression thereof for the time past. You should inquire, therefore, whether, when you have repeated these words after each command, you really felt that you had in the sight of God broken that command, and needed his pardoning mercy. We are farther taught to add, "and incline our hearts to keep this law." This plainly expresses, if we repeat it in sincerity, that we are convinced that we have neither natural inclination, nor power of ourselves, to obey God's holy commands: but look up to him, and depend wholly on him, to dispose and enable us to do his will; and really purpose and desire to obey his holy law.

Our church then leads us to pray for the king; in all its services being mindful of the apostolical precept, *I exhort, therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men, for kings, and for all that are in authority.*

The COLLECTS for each Sunday are generally adapted to prepare our minds for the portion of scripture selected from the epistles and gospels. Our church, after the declaration of the law in the ten commandments, brings before us some suitable and affecting portion of the gospel of that Saviour by whom we are *redeemed from the curse of the law.*

THE NICENE CREED follows. It is so called because it was for the most part framed at the great council held at Nice, in 325. It is right and suitable, after reading the word of God, and before we communicate together, that we should mutually acknowledge the same faith.

The part of this service that we have hitherto considered, is directed to be read every Sunday, as it were to invite Christians to more frequent communion. And observe how far we have now been led. The holy law of God having been set before us, we have been taught to acknowledge ourselves guilty and helpless. The gospel of Christ being then read, we have been called on to express our faith in God as our Father, Jesus as our Saviour, and the Holy Ghost as our Sanctifier. Retrace then your thoughts. Have you been sincere when you have repeated this service? Have you felt, as well as acknowledged, your sinfulness and your weakness? Has the gospel really been good tidings to you? Was the profession of faith repeated in the creed more than a mere

expression of the lips? Was it the unfeigned confidence and conviction of an upright and true heart? If you have proceeded thus far in sincerity, you are a penitent believer; you are in a fit state of mind to receive the Lord's Supper.

The Sunday before that on which it is designed to celebrate this ordinance, a suitable EXHORTATION is appointed to be read. Two are given in the Prayer Book. One contains directions to prevent our receiving it in a careless and presumptuous spirit; and the other urges those to come who are in the habit of neglecting. You will find it useful to read these to assist you in your preparation.

We now come to that part of the Liturgy which is more directly connected with the administration of this institution.

A PRAYER BEFORE THE COMMUNION SERVICE.

O Lord Jesus Christ, who came into the world to save sinners, and invitest the weary and heavy-laden to come unto thee: against whom the reproach was once cast, *This man receiveth sinners and eateth with them*,—burdened with many sins, I would now come unto thee as my only, and complete, and all-sufficient Saviour, my wise and powerful, my tender and loving Lord and Master, and in obedience to thy command, I would now at thy table remember thee. O give me, and all of us assembled with one accord in this place, grace to believe and love. Give us a calm and tranquil mind; let us set the Lord before us, and be humbled in his presence, and be cheered with his love. So manifest thyself to us, that we may have a happy experience that our Saviour is in the

midst of us; may it be a season of near and close communion with thee, and with each other; may great grace be upon us, and thus may we enjoy together the communion of thy body and thy blood, and feel that though many, we are all one in thee, O Christ Jesus, and one with thee and the Father; and have an assured hope that we shall at length be with thee, where thou art, and for ever behold thy glory.

When assembled together at the Lord's table, you are called on by a selection of appropriate passages, to contribute according to your means to the relief of your poorer brethren. Thus an opportunity is given you of shewing your faith by your works. Our Saviour seems to suppose we should never come here before the Lord without a gift. Matt. v. 23. These passages are as follow:—

LET your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven. Matt. v. 16.

Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where rust and moth doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven: where neither rust nor moth doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through and steal. Matt. vi. 19.

Whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, even so do unto them; for this is the law and the prophets. Matt. vii. 12.

Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. Matt. vii. 21.

Zaccheus stood forth, and said unto the Lord, Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor; and if I have done any wrong to any man, I restore fourfold. Luke xix. 8.

Who goeth a warfare at any time at his own cost? Who planteth a vineyard, and eateth not of the fruit thereof? Or who feedeth a flock, and eateth not of the milk of the flock? 1 Cor. ix. 7.

If we have sown unto you spiritual things, is it a great matter if we should reap your worldly things? 1 Cor. ix. 11.

Do ye not know that they who minister about holy things live of the sacrifice; and they who wait at the altar are partakers with the altar? Even so hath the Lord also ordained that they who preach the gospel should live of the gospel. 1 Cor. ix. 13, 14.

He that soweth little shall reap little; and he that soweth plenteously shall reap plenteously. Let every man do according as he

is disposed in his heart, not grudgingly, or of necessity; for God loveth a cheerful giver. 2 Cor. ix. 6.

Let him that is taught in the word minister unto him that teacheth, in all good things. Be not deceived, God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he reap. Gal. vi. 6, 7.

While we have time, let us do good unto all men; and specially unto them that are of the household of faith. Gal. vi. 10.

Godliness is great riches, if a man be content with that he hath: for we brought nothing into the world, neither may we carry any thing out. 1 Tim. vi. 6, 7.

Charge them who are rich in this world, that they be ready to give, and glad to distribute, laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may attain eternal life. 1 Tim. vi. 17—19.

God is not unrighteous, that he will forget your works, and labour that proceedeth of love; which love ye have shewed for his Name's sake, who have ministered unto the saints, and yet do minister. Heb. vi. 10.

To do good, and to distribute, forget not; for with such sacrifices God is well pleased. Heb. xiii. 16.

Whoso hath this world's good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him? 1 John iii. 17.

Give alms of thy goods, and never turn thy face from any poor man; and then the face of the Lord shall not be turned away from thee. Tobit iv. 7.

Be merciful after thy power. If thou hast much, give plenteously: if thou hast little, do thy diligence gladly to give of that little: for so gatherest thou thyself a good reward in the day of necessity. Tobit iv. 8, 9.

He that hath pity upon the poor, lendeth unto the Lord: and look, what he layeth out, it shall be paid him again. Prov. xix. 17.

Blessed be the man that provideth for the sick and needy; the Lord shall deliver him in the time of trouble. Psalm xli. 1.

In giving your alms, this or the like ejaculation may be used—

All things come of thee, and of thine own have we given thee. 1 Chron. xxix. 14.

Our charity towards our fellow-creatures, and especially towards our fellow-Christians, is farther manifested by the following earnest prayer for the whole church. The Priest is directed to say,

LET us pray for the whole state of Christ's Church Militant here on earth.

Almighty and everlasting God, who by thy holy Apostle hast taught us to make prayers and supplications, and to give thanks for all men: we humbly beseech thee most mercifully *to accept our alms and oblations, and* to receive these our prayers, which we offer unto thy Divine Majesty; beseeching thee to inspire continually the universal Church with the

spirit of truth, unity, and concord: and grant that all they that do confess thy Holy Name may agree in the truth of thy Holy Word, and live in unity and godly love. We beseech thee also to save and defend all Christian Kings, Princes, and Governors; and specially thy servant VICTORIA our Queen; that under her we may be godly and quietly governed; and grant unto her whole Council, and to all that are put in authority under her, that they may truly and indifferently minister justice, to the punishment of wickedness and vice, and to the maintenance of thy true religion, and virtue. Give grace, O heavenly Father, to all Bishops and Curates, that they may both by their life and doctrine set forth thy true and lively word, and rightly and duly administer thy holy sacraments: and to all thy people give thy heavenly grace; and especially to this congregation here present; that, with meek heart and due reverence, they may hear and receive thy Holy World; truly serving thee in holiness and righteousness all the days of their life. And we most humbly beseech thee of thy goodness, O Lord, to comfort and succour all them, who in this transitory life are in trouble, sorrow, need, sickness, or any other adversity. And we also bless thy holy name for all thy servants departed this life in thy faith and fear: beseeching thee to give us grace so to follow their good examples, that with them we may be partakers of thy heavenly kingdom. Grant this, O Father, for Jesus Christ's sake, our only mediator and advocate. Amen.

Let your heart be making a fervent, but secret and silent "Amen" to the various petitions, as the minister proceeds in offering up the above prayer.

The Priest then reads this Exhortation.

DEARLY beloved in the Lord, ye that mind to come to the holy Communion of the Body and Blood of our Saviour Christ, must consider how St. Paul exhorteth all persons diligently to try and examine themselves, before they presume to eat of that bread, and drink of that Cup. For as the benefit is great, if with a true penitent heart and lively faith, we receive that holy Sacrament; (for then we spiritually eat the flesh of Christ, and drink his blood; then we dwell in Christ, and Christ in us; we are one with Christ, and Christ with us;) so is the danger great, if we receive the same unworthily. For then we are guilty of the Body and Blood of Christ our Saviour; we eat and drink our own damnation, not considering the Lord's Body; we kindle God's wrath against us; we provoke him to plague us with divers diseases, and sundry kinds of death. Judge therefore yourselves, brethren, that ye be not judged of the Lord; repent you truly for your sins past; have a lively and steadfast faith in Christ our Saviour; amend your lives, and be in perfect charity with all men; so shall ye be meet partakers of those holy mysteries. And above all things ye must give most humble and hearty thanks to God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, for the redemption of the world by the death and passion of our Saviour Christ, both God and man; who did humble himself, even to the death upon the cross, for us miserable sinners, who lay in darkness and the shadow of death: that he might make us the children of God, and exalt us to everlasting life. And to the end that we

should alway remember the exceeding great love of our Master and only Saviour, Jesus Christ, thus dying for us, and the innumerable benefits which by his precious blood-shedding he hath obtained to us; he hath instituted and ordained holy mysteries, as pledges of his love, and for a continual remembrance of his death, to our great and endless comfort. To him, therefore, with the Father and the Holy Ghost, let us give (as we are most bounden) continual thanks; submitting ourselves wholly to his holy will and pleasure, and studying to serve him in true holiness and righteousness all the days of our life. Amen.

We are here specially urged to self-examination and thankfulness. Self-examination is urged on account of the danger of coming unworthily. The word "damnation" must not here be understood of eternal destruction, but the just condemnation and displeasure of God. Self-examination is also pressed on our attention from the benefit of duly receiving, as then we are partakers of Christ's salvation; "we dwell in Christ, and Christ in us." What an intimate and blessed communion does this describe! O reader, seek to know its blessedness in your own experience! We are called on in the latter part of the exhortation, to be thankful for the inestimable benefit of redemption, the chief thing ever to be regarded in the Lord's Supper. Notice the confession, *miserable sinners, &c.* Have you felt that this is your true character? It is easy to express this sentiment, but it is very difficult really to feel it. Yet without a real conviction of your true state, you cannot be cordially thankful for your redemption. You can neither duly prize, nor heartily thank, Jesus Christ. The latter part of the exhortation shows us that the true comfort of the soul is Christ crucified for our sins, and Christ expected to appear again, to complete our happiness. We should hear the whole in the spirit of prayer, sending up in secret such ejaculations as these, "Lord, grant that I may receive

these benefits!" "Lord, deliver me from this danger!"

The characters by whom comfort may be expected are described in the following ADDRESS.

YE that do truly and earnestly repent you of your sins, and are in love and charity with your neighbours, and intend to lead a new life, following the commandments of God, and walking from henceforth in his holy ways; draw near with faith, and take this holy Sacrament to your comfort; and make your humble confession to Almighty God, meekly kneeling upon your knees.

While this is repeating by the Minister, we should also be lifting up our hearts to God, to give us grace to repent, and be in love with others, and walk in the ways of God.

To this succeeds this general CONFESSION to be made by both Minister and people, all kneeling.

ALMIGHTY God, Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, maker of all things, judge of all men; we acknowledge and bewail our manifold sins and wickedness, which we, from time to time, most grievously have committed by thought, word, and deed, against thy Divine Majesty, provoking most justly thy wrath and indignation against us. We do earnestly repent, and are heartily sorry for these our misdoings; the remembrance of them is grievous unto us; the burden of them is intolerable. Have mercy upon us, have mercy upon us, most merciful Father; for thy Son our Lord Jesus Christ's sake, forgive us all that is past; and grant that we may ever hereafter serve and please thee, in newness of life, to the honour and glory of thy name; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

We here, in most just and abasing expressions, deplore our sinfulness. This confession should lead us to think of our own personal guilt in any light that may most affect us, and to charge our memory with those views of our iniquity, which we know, by experience, most humble us, and shows us, with peculiar emphasis, the need which we have of Christ's blood. But while we have reason, with the deepest contrition, to confess that the burden of our sins is

intolerable,* (being a load that would have sunk us to eternal ruin) let us endeavour to keep our eye on Christ, and by faith transfer our guilt over to him, bewailing our utter unworthiness, glorying in his worthiness, and soliciting, through him, not only peace of conscience, but strength for serving him in newness of life.

This ABSOLUTION, or declaration of forgiveness is then pronounced by the Priest.

ALMIGHTY God, our heavenly Father, who of his great mercy hath promised forgiveness of sins to all them that with hearty repentance and true faith turn unto him; have mercy upon you; pardon and deliver you from all your sins; confirm and strengthen you in all goodness; and bring you to everlasting life; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

All who heartily repent and truly believe, all who have with any feeling joined in the preceding service, may and should here apply to themselves the comfort of the gospel, as declared by the appointed Minister of Christ. But man's words cannot of themselves speak peace to the troubled conscience: and therefore the Minister's declaration of forgiveness is confirmed by these well-chosen passages of Scripture, the Minister saying,

HEAR what comfortable words our Saviour Christ saith unto all that truly turn unto him.

Come unto me all ye that travail and are heavy laden, and I will refresh you, Matt. xi. 28.

So God loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son, to the end that all that believe in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. John iii. 16.

* The burden of our sins is intolerable, not as it regards our feeling of the evil of sin; for alas! we have in general far too little feeling on that subject. From this mistake, some well-disposed persons have declared themselves afraid to join in the confession; but we are taught only to confess our conviction of the affecting truth, that the guilt of sin will, if it is not removed, for ever ruin our souls.

Hear also what St. Paul saith.	Hear also what St. John saith.
This is a true saying, and worthy of all men to be received, That Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, 1 Tim. i. 15.	If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous; and he is the propitiation for our sins, 1 John ii. 1.

These passages should be heard in faith and prayer. They are indeed most comfortable. They tell the weary, burdened, and troubled conscience. Take not God's pardon on my word. I have a commission from above. Hear our Saviour Christ; hear St. Paul; hear St. John speak and say, "Poor, burdened, troubled sinner, here is peace for thee; Christ takes away all thy sins, and will give thee everlasting life."

It will have been seen that there is set forth in this service, as has been noticed, one of the most solemn transactions that can take place on earth between God and man. "If we have been in earnest, if we have rightly joined in it, we are justified by faith, we rejoice in God, and we have peace of conscience. High, and holy, and blessed is our state; we are children of God, and heirs of everlasting life."

The several parts which follow, describe, and assist the feelings and emotions of the pious and believing soul. Humility and praise sweetly temper one another. Mourning for sin, and joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, delightfully go together.

The Priest proceeds, saying,	*Answer.*—It is meet and right so to do.
Lift up your hearts.	*Then shall the Priest turn to the Lord's Table, and say,*
Answer.—We lift them up unto the Lord.	It is very meet, right, and our bounden duty, that we should, at
Priest.—Let us give thanks unto our Lord God.	

all times and in all places, give thanks unto thee, O Lord,* Holy Father, Almighty, everlasting God.

* [These words (Holy Father) must be omitted on Trinity Sunday.]

Here shall follow the proper Prefaces, according to the time, if there be any specially appointed; or else immediately shall follow.

THEREFORE with Angels and Archangels, and with all the company of heaven, we laud and magnify thy glorious name; evermore praising thee, and saying, Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of hosts, heaven and earth are full of thy glory: Glory be to thee, O Lord, most High. Amen.

PROPER PREFACES.

Upon Christmas-Day, and Seven Days after.

BECAUSE thou didst give Jesus Christ thine only Son to be born as at this time for us; who, by the operation of the Holy Ghost, was made very man of the substance of the Virgin Mary his Mother; and that without spot of sin, to make us clean from all sin. Therefore, with angels, &c.

Upon Easter-Day, and Seven Days after.

BUT chiefly we are bound to praise thee for the glorious Resurrection of thy Son Jesus Christ our Lord; for he is the very Paschal Lamb, which was offered for us, and hath taken away the sin of the world: who by his death hath destroyed death, and by his rising to life again hath restored to us everlasting life. Therefore with angels, &c.

Upon Ascension-Day, and Seven Days after.

THROUGH thy most dearly beloved Son, Jesus Christ our Lord; who after his most glorious Resurrection, manifestly appeared to all his apostles, and in their sight ascended up into heaven to prepare a place for us; that where he is, thither we might also ascend, and reign with him in glory. Therefore with angels, &c.

Upon Whit-Sunday, and Six Days after.

THROUGH Jesus Christ our Lord; according to whose most true promise the Holy Ghost came down as at this time from heaven with a sudden great sound as it had been a mighty wind, in the likeness of fiery tongues, lighting upon the Apostles, to teach them, and to lead them to all truth: giving them both the gift of divers languages, and also boldness with fervent zeal constantly to preach the Gospel unto all nations; whereby we have been brought out of darkness and error into the clear light and true knowledge of thee, and of thy Son Jesus Christ. Therefore with angels, &c.

Upon the Feast of Trinity only.

WHO art one God, one Lord; not one only person, but three Persons in one Substance. For that which we believe of the glory of the Father, the same we believe of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, without any difference or inequality. Therefore with angels, &c.

After these holy songs of praise, the Minister offers up, in the name of the congregation, the following affecting prayer.

We do not presume to come to this thy table, O merciful Lord, trusting in our own righteousness, but in thy manifold and great mercies. We are not worthy so much as to gather up the crumbs

under thy table. But thou art the same Lord, whose property is always to have mercy: Grant us, therefore, gracious Lord, so to eat the flesh of thy dear Son Jesus Christ, and to drink his blood, that our sinful bodies may be made clean by his body, and our souls washed through his most precious blood, and that we may evermore dwell in him, and he in us. Amen.

In this prayer the Church adopts similar expressions to those of Daniel, of the humble and lowly feelings which most become us after our best preparations, and in our highest devotions, and most intimate communion with God. "We do not presume to come, trusting in our own righteousness." There appears also an evident allusion to the history of the Canaanitish woman, only with a still more debasing expression; she said, *The dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from their master's table;* (Matthew xv. 27.) but we are taught with our heart and mouth to confess ourselves "not worthy so much as to gather up the crumbs," &c. In stating our title to God's acceptance, all our works are to be utterly renounced as of no worth. The worthiness of Christ is all we have to plead.

The priest then says the prayer of consecration.

ALMIGHTY God, our heavenly Father, who of thy tender mercy didst give thine only Son Jesus Christ to suffer death upon the cross for our redemption; who made there (by his one oblation of himself once offered) a full, perfect, and sufficient sacrifice, oblation, and satisfaction, for the sins of the whole world; and did institute, and in his holy Gospel command us to continue, a perpetual memory of that his precious death, until his coming again, hear us, O merciful Father, we most humbly beseech thee; and grant that we, receiving these thy creatures of bread and wine, according to thy Son our Saviour Jesus Christ's Holy institution, in remembrance of his death and passion, may be partakers of his most blessed Body and Blood; who, in the same night that he was betrayed took bread: and when he had given thanks, he brake it, and gave it to his disciples, saying, Take, eat, this is my body which is given for you: do this in remembrance of me. Likewise after supper he took the cup; and, when he had given thanks, he gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of this; for this is my Blood of the New Testament, which is shed for you and for many for the remission of sins: do this, as oft as ye shall drink it, in remembrance of me. Amen.

This prayer brings before us the affecting circumstances in which this ordinance was first instituted, and the very words of our Lord at its appointment. It assures us, according to the scriptures, of the all-important truth, that Christ gave himself to be a full, perfect, and sufficient sacrifice, oblation, and satisfaction, for the sins of the whole world. A most encouraging and animating truth to the naturally anxious and desponding heart of the humbled sinner. Let us lift up our hearts in the use of this prayer, to our Saviour, to give his blessing to the institution which he has ordained, using the following or similar ejaculations at the intervals which the things to be done by the minister, while he is reading this prayer, will afford.

At the Minister laying his hands on, and breaking the bread.

May thy stripes, O Saviour! heal my soul; and do thou ever feed me with the bread of life.

At the Minister's taking the cup.

Wash me, O Lord Christ! in thy most precious blood, and cleanse me from all my sins.

Before receiving the sacred elements.

The good Lord pardon me, and every one that prepareth his heart to seek God, the Lord God of his fathers, though he be not cleansed according to the purification of the sanctuary. 2 Chron. xxx. 18, 19.

The consecrated elements are to be given to the people kneeling.*

* There has been much said against this posture, but it appears to the author to be suitable and becoming. No posture being appointed in the institution, and no Church feeling it convenient to

If there are many communicants, you may find this a suitable opportunity for private prayer and meditation. See chapters iv. and vi. in this part of the Treatise.

When the Minister delivers the bread to any one, he says,

THE body of our Lord Jesus Christ, which was given for thee, preserve thy body and soul unto everlasting life. Take and eat this in remembrance that Christ died for thee, and feed on him in thy heart by faith with thanksgiving.

And when he delivers the cup to any one, he says,

THE blood of our Lord Jesus Christ which was shed for thee, preserve thy body and soul unto everlasting life. Drink this in remembrance that Christ's blood was shed for thee, and be thankful.

In both these addresses we have a prayer and a direction. The prayer should lead us to commit our whole selves, body, soul, and spirit, unto God: and the direction puts us in mind, in the very act of receiving, of one great end of this ordinance, to feed on Christ in our hearts by faith, with thanksgiving.

comform to that which was probably the original posture, lying on couches, according to their custom at meals, in that day, (John xiii. 23, 25.) each church is at liberty to fix that which the heads of that Church think decent. If our hearts are in a right state, they will be full of prayer and praise; we may well then be in that posture which best becomes devotion. But in a matter of indifference, surely the Christian may cheerfully adopt the custom of the Church with which he communicates, or submit to any form appointed by those in authority over him in the place where he dwells. All adoration of the elements is expressly excluded by the following note at the end of the service:—

"WHEREAS it is ordained in this office for the administration of the Lord's Supper, that the Communicants should receive the same kneeling: (which order is well meant, for a signification of our humble and grateful acknowledgment of the benefits of Christ therein given to all worthy Receivers, and for the avoiding of such profanation and disorder in the Holy Communion, as might otherwise ensue;) yet, lest the same kneeling should by any persons, either out of ignorance and infirmity, or out of malice or obstinacy, be misconstrued and depraved; it is hereby declared, That thereby no adoration is intended, or ought to be done, either unto the Sacramental Bread or Wine there bodily received, or unto any corporal presence of Christ's natural flesh and blood."

"When the Minister says, Take, eat—Drink ye all of it—let us think how freely God offers Christ to us, and how earnestly he presses us to accept of him as our Saviour." And surely, as we have fresh need of pardon every time that we communicate, so should we afresh seek an interest in our Saviour's righteousness, and the washing and cleansing of his most precious blood.

Such thoughts as these may suitably engage our minds.

At taking the Bread.

I desire to remember Jesus Christ dying on the cross, for me.
I believe that he gave himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God.
Let me now receive out of his fulness all I need.
I trust in Jesus alone for eternal life.
I take Christ for my only Saviour and Lord.
I give myself to his service.
I look forward to his coming again.

At drinking the Wine.

I desire to remember that his blood was shed for me.
I believe that that blood cleanseth from all sin.
I mourn for my many sins that pierced him.
I humbly lay claim to the New Covenant blessings.
I freely and heartily forgive all my enemies.
I desire ardently to love all the people of Christ.
All praise be to God for his unspeakable gift.
O when shall I rise to partake of the marriage-supper of the Lamb?

The POST COMMUNION, or service immediately after receiving, begins with repeating again the Lord's Prayer.

OUR Father, which art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. Amen.

This prayer, after such services as have been described, may well affect us with new feelings, leading us to call on our heavenly Father with a peculiar measure of the spirit of adoption.

One of the two following prayers are then offered up.

O LORD and heavenly Father, we thy humble servants entirely desire thy fatherly goodness mercifully to accept this our sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving; most humbly beseeching thee to grant, that by the merits and death of thy Son Jesus Christ, and through faith in his blood, we and all thy whole Church may obtain remission of our sins, and all other benefits of his passion. And here we offer and present unto thee, O Lord, ourselves, our souls, and bodies, to be a reasonable, holy, and lively sacrifice unto thee; humbly beseeching thee, that all we, who are partakers of this holy communion, may be fulfilled with thy grace and heavenly benediction. And although we be unworthy, through our manifold sins, to offer unto thee any sacrifice, yet we beseech thee to accept this our bounden duty and service; not weighing our merits but pardoning our offences, through Jesus Christ our Lord; by whom, and with whom, in the unity of the Holy Ghost, all honour and glory be unto thee, O Father Almighty, world without end. Amen.

Or this,

ALMIGHTY and ever-living God, we most heartily thank thee for that thou dost vouchsafe to feed us, who have duly received these holy mysteries, with the spiritual food of the most precious Body and blood of thy Son our Saviour Jesus Christ: and dost assure us thereby of thy favour and goodness towards us; and that we are very members incorporate in the mystical body of thy Son, which is the blessed company of all faithful people; and are also heirs through hope of thy everlasting kingdom, by the merits of the most precious death and passion of thy dear Son. And we most humbly beseech thee, O heavenly Father, so to assist us with thy grace, that we may continue in that holy fellowship, and do all such good works as thou hast prepared for us to walk in, through Jesus Christ our Lord; to whom with thee and the Holy Ghost, be all honour and glory, world without end. Amen.

These prayers petition for the confirmation of our forgiveness, and of all other benefits of Christ's passion, and ask for grace to continue in the holy fellowship to which we have been admitted. They are expressive of the feelings of a mind which came indeed with a load of guilt and bondage on the conscience, but goes away pardoned, peaceful, and free. There is an opposite danger to that of self-righteous

dependance on the Sacrament, that of having too slight thoughts of its utility. Milner observes, "Well-disposed persons who often gain both spiritual comfort and strength through sermons, gain nothing from the Sacrament. Why is this? They are in too lazy a posture of soul; they do not reverently esteem, as they should, this precious means of grace, as the channel in which the comforts of salvation may be expected richly to flow. Our Reformers speak differently of the importance of this Institution. From the expression, 'Dost assure us thereby of thy favour and goodness towards us, and that we are very members incorporate in the mystical body of thy Son,' it is evident that the blessing of assurance was, in their idea, connected with the right reception of this ordinance." Yet many who obtain not the full assurance of hope, seeking the Lord in earnest, still gain some increase of faith, hope, and love. The consecration here made of ourselves to be "a reasonable, holy, and lively sacrifice to God," comes with great propriety after the memorial of such mercies. It is according to that exhortation of St. Paul—*I beseech you, therefore, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice.* The love of God in Christ Jesus, when brought home to the heart by the Holy Spirit, never fails of its efficacy in influencing a man to give himself unreservedly to God.

The concluding hymn of praise is the following sublime thanksgiving.

Then shall be said or sung.

GLORY be to God on high, and on earth peace, good will towards men. We praise thee, we bless thee, we worship thee, we glorify thee, we give thanks

to thee for thy great glory, O Lord God, heavenly King, God the Father Almighty.

O Lord, the only begotten Son Jesu Christ. O Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father, that takest away the sins of the world, have mercy upon us. Thou that takest away the sins of the world, have mercy upon us. Thou that takest away the sins of the world, receive our prayer. Thou that sittest at the right hand of God the Father, have mercy upon us.

For thou only art holy, thou only art the Lord: thou only, O Christ, with the Holy Ghost, art most high in the glory of God the Father. Amen.

This hymn seems to unite the seraphic praise of the glorified hosts above, with the deep abasement of the contrite heart on earth. We here copy the example of our Saviour, who sung an hymn after the institution of the Lord's Supper. O had we a due sense of our privileges as sons of God, and our prospects as heirs of his glory, with what rapturous emotions, joined to what deep humility, should we sing this song!

The Minister closes the whole with this BLESSING:

THE peace of God, which passeth all understanding, keep your hearts and minds in the knowledge and love of God, and of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord: and the blessing of God Almighty the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, be amongst you and remain with you always. Amen.

This blessing seems to include the main benefits of both Dispensations; that of Moses, (Numb. vi. 24—26,) and that of the Lamb, (John xiv. 27; Phil. iv. 7.) It is a parting prayer that the benefits which we have just received and commemorated, may abide in our hearts for ever.

Inquire then, Christian communicant, whether your feelings in some degree correspond with the holy sentiments of this service. Such an inquiry will be both humbling and profitable. "We would be far from denying the acceptableness of many a real

communicant who may not come up to that full fervour of soul which is evidently the spirit of the institution," but by aiming at the highest degree of communion with our unseen but ever-present Lord and Saviour, we are best promoting our own edification and happiness.

May divine grace so prevent and assist us, that we may never frequent this ordinance, dead to every spiritual sensation, go through the whole in a formal lifeless manner, and depart as cold and worldly as ever!

And what shall we say to those who frequently, or altogether, deprive themselves of the benefits of this institution? They are like those who would prefer dwelling in a miserable and decaying hovel, when they might reside in a king's palace. They are like those who had rather feed on husks with swine, than banquet at the table of a loving and bountiful father.

Christians! neglect not the opportunities afforded you of receiving the pledges of a father's love. Can you too often remember the grace of a dying Saviour? Can you, more frequently than you desire, receive the assurance that God is reconciled to you: that his Spirit dwells in you, that you are his children, and that heaven is your home? These are the blessings you enjoy, when devoutly partaking of the Lord's Supper.

CHAPTER VI.

ON THE REMEMBRANCE OF CHRIST AT THE LORD'S TABLE.

WE have already considered, in the former part, the nature of that remembrance which is our duty at the table of the Lord, with a more immediate reference to his death; but this remembrance is so primary a part of our due receiving of the Lord's Supper, that it may be advantageous here to consider it again, devotionally and practically, in other views.

How can we best remember our Divine Redeemer at his table? Gracious is the promise which he has made; *the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.* May that blessed Comforter assist us to remember Jesus in his person and offices, for our souls' comfort.

Remember him first as IMMANUEL, *God with us.* This wonderful name includes his divine glory as God; his omnipotent power over all his enemies, and that powerfully engaged in behalf of his people and on their side. *With us,* implies what is elsewhere

asserted, that he was *in all things made like unto his brethren*, Heb. ii. 17. He was God in our nature, conceived and born of a virgin, and lived and dwelt among us, *bone of our bone, and flesh of our flesh.* He dwells also by faith in the hearts of all his people: *Christ in us the hope of glory.* O may I know the joy of having God with me, and of being in peace and union with the great God, the Lord of all, in Christ; *God, in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself*, and I, through him, *reconciled to God.* May my mind be one with his, and may I enter into the sweetness of entire resignation of my own will to that of my Heavenly Father. May the rich hope of having God with me for ever, fill me *with joy unspeakable and full of glory.*

Remember him as JESUS, the Saviour, God our Saviour. It is *the name above every name, at which every knee shall bow.* The name is the same as the Hebrew *Joshua*, whose name originally was Hoshea, but it was changed into Joshua, on his being exalted to be the captain of the Lord's host, and thus the striking type of our Lord Christ. *Hoshea* signifies Saviour; *Joshua*, Jehovah, the Saviour; hence the name of Joshua, or *Jesus*, perfectly corresponds to *Immanuel*, and fulfils the prophecy, *They shall call his name Immanuel.* Jehovah, coming in our nature to effect our salvation. *He himself* (αυτος) *shall save his people from their sins*, Matt. i. 21. Sin is our great enemy, the cause of our misery, and of all God's wrath against us. From sin no created being can deliver the sinner. But *help is laid on one that is mighty, and mighty to save.* He bore the curse for us, and redeemed us from the curse of the law: he fulfilled the law as our head and representative, and he

has obtained perfect righteousness for us: he vanquished Satan for us, and will bruise him under our feet shortly; he purifies his people to be *a peculiar people zealous of good works* now, and soon he will return as their complete Deliverer from death, hell, and the grave; this salvation is *ready* now *to be revealed*, and *when Christ who is our life shall appear, we shall appear with him in glory*, and his people with one voice shall exclaim in that day, *Lo! this is our God, we have waited for him, we will be glad and rejoice in his salvation.* Then shall we see him face to face, and ever be with him. O Lord, visit me with thy salvation, and satisfy me early with thy mercy. May a divine Saviour be my exclusive and entire confidence.

May Jesus himself save me from all my sins, and conquer all my enemies, and bring me to his heavenly kingdom.

Remember him as THE MESSIAH. The Hebrew word *Messiah* and the Greek word *Christ*, mean the same as the English word *anointed*. It points out the consecration of our divine Lord to his office of our Saviour, by the anointing of the Holy Ghost. Ps. ii. 2. Dan. ix. 25, 26. Is. lxi. 1. Luke iv. 18—22. The great end of the scriptures being *written* is that we *might believe that Jesus is* THE CHRIST, *the Son of God, and that believing we might have life through his name.*

Under the Old Testament, various persons sustaining certain offices, and various things, were appointed to be types of our Lord Christ; and were anointed, or set apart for their ends by being anointed. Their full and complete significations meet only in the Lord Jesus, who is emphatically THE ANOINTED ONE.

Jesus is also *the Anointer* of his people, as well as the Anointed. He communicates of his fulness to them. *The anointing which ye have received of Him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you, but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in him.*

By anointing, the object anointed, as the tabernacle, &c., was not only consecrated to the particular office intended, but its connexion with the Saviour, and an illustration of his office was pointed out; and where a person, as the prophet, priest, or king was anointed, the need of the Spirit of the Lord, to qualify for that office was signified. O how amply was my divine Lord qualified for his office! Isaiah lxi. 1—3. How suited is he to be my Saviour! What gifts he has received for me! May he now impart to me of that blessed unction which he received for sinners, and which he gives to all his people. Blessed Jesus, *baptize* me not only with water, but *with the Holy Ghost.*

Remember him as the PROPHET. Under this name he was foretold at an early period in the history of the church of God. *The Lord thy God will raise up unto thee a Prophet, from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me; unto him ye shall hearken.* Deut. xviii. 15. A prophet is not only one who foretels future events, but who interprets and explains the word and will of God: making it plain to those he instructs. The Lord Jesus Christ is pre-eminently the prophet; he *spake as never man spake, and his words are spirit and life.* He teaches not only outwardly to the ear, and intellectually to the understanding, but also effectually to the heart. He reveals the Father unto

us, (Matt. xi. 27.) *The only-begotten Son which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him,* (John i. 8.) imparting the *Spirit of wisdom and revelation, in the knowledge of him.* Ephes. i. 7. In this office, his manhood especially adapts him to be a suitable instructor of sinful men. Deut. xviii. 15—19. He was to be like Moses, a man, a leader of the people, a mediator, a deliverer from bondage, a destroyer of their enemies, and a conductor through the wilderness, providing for all their wants, and giving them another covenant. O Jesus, be my Teacher, Mediator, and Conductor, bring me speedily from bondage, conduct me safely through the wilderness, and provide for all my wants till I reach my heavenly home. May I be emptied "more and more of myself, of my carnal will, and of all unsanctified knowledge, and be filled with thee and with that wisdom which leads to the contemplation of God, and to the everlasting enjoyment of him; instruct me not only by lessons of wisdom, but also by lessons of love, that will make my heart burn within me, and guide me by thy counsel, till thou hast brought me to thy glory."

Remember him as the HIGH PRIEST. The Priest *is ordained for men in things pertaining to God, that he may offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins, who can have compassion on the ignorant, and on them that are out of the way.* Such an High Priest have we, *one touched with the feeling of our infirmities, in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.* Of him it could be said, *Once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself.* And now he is gone *into heaven itself to appear in the presence of God for us*—and, *to them that look for him, shall he appear the second time, without sin unto salvation.*

The realizing of this office is full of unspeakable comfort to the burdened sinner. *Our Lord has an unchangeable priesthood; wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them.* Hebrews vii. 24, 25. God, our Father, has, with an oath, consecrated him to this office (verse 21) that we might have the stronger consolation. How secure must be the salvation of those who fly *for refuge to lay hold upon this hope. Who is he that condemneth?* Shall *Christ that died, yea, rather that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us?* To him then let me look and come day by day; and, through him, though so sinful, have free access to the Most High and most holy God, as one having reconciled me to himself in Christ Jesus, and who no longer imputes my transgressions to me.

Remember him as KING. This office has not been so fully developed, as it will be when he returns. Then the royal proclamations, *The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord and his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever; Alleluia! for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth,* (Rev. xi. 15; xix. 6.) go forth, and are fully realized; and then he shall sit upon the throne of his glory; (Matt. xix. 28; xxv. 31.) yet even now, seated at his Father's right hand, (Psalm cx. 1.) *On his Father's throne.* Rev. iii. 21. He is *exalted as a Prince and Saviour,* (Acts v. 31.) and *all power in heaven and earth is given to him.* Matt. xxviii. 19.

This glorious title includes his Godhead—for no one is *King of kings* and *Lord of lords,* and has the glorious power of this our King, but he who is God.

Hence the Psalmist addresses him, *Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever, the sceptre of thy kingdom is a right sceptre*—so his kingdom is called *the kingdom of the Most High*. Dan. vii. 27.

As our King, he will dethrone and destroy Satan, the prince of this world, and make his feeble saints victorious over the principalities, and powers, and the rulers of the darkness of this world, and spiritual wickedness in high places. Ephes. vi. 12. Rom. viii. 37—39. He will completely overthrow, and put under his feet all his and our enemies. 1 Cor. xv. 24—28. For the full accomplishment of this we wait for his return. He sits at the right hand of his Father till the time arrives when God shall make his enemies his footstool. Then he comes again in his glory, and reigns till he hath put all enemies under his feet.

O my God and my King, I yield to the sceptre of thy love; make me willing in this day of thy grace and power; subdue all my spiritual foes, my enmity, my unbelief, my self-will, my indifference, and pride, and love of the world; and all those corruptions of my fallen nature, which are perpetually defiling my soul. O make me meet by thine own Spirit, for that everlasting kingdom in which thy saints shall share thy bliss and glory through eternity!

Remember him as the REDEEMER. The "Goel," or kinsman Redeemer, being the nearest of kin, was to exert himself in favour of his destitute kinsman. He had a right to redeem his lost inheritance, and was permitted to avenge the death of his relation by killing the slayer, if found out of the city of refuge. In these things he was a type of Christ, (Job xix. 25. Psa. xix. 15; cvii. 2; cxix. 154. Isa. xxxv. 9; xliii.

1; li. 10; lii. 3; lix. 20; lxiii. 4. Hos. xiii. 14.) Jesus assumed our nature; became our kinsman; has, at the costly price of his own blood, recovered our souls, will finally restore our lost inheritance, and avenge all his people by the destruction of Satan, that great murderer, and all his followers who have not been warned by his word to flee from the wrath to come, and take shelter now in the city of refuge.

O what a full and complete redemption is that which our kinsman Redeemer, Jesus, has provided for me! *We have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins according to the riches of his grace; in whom also we have obtained an inheritance,* the pledge and foretaste of which is, that we are now *sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise which is the earnest of our inheritance, until the redemption of the purchased possession.* How should we long and thirst for that day, when our Redeemer shall come and raise us from our present state of bondage and corruption to partake of his likeness, and to reign in his kingdom. He has *obtained eternal redemption for us.* Heb. ix. 12. We are *waiting* for its full completion, *for the adoption, to wit the redemption of our body;* and then with what joy shall we sing through eternity the song, *Thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood, out of every kindred and tongue, and people, and nation; and hast made us unto our God kings and priests, and we shall reign on the earth.* Rev. v. 2, 10.*

See, Christian reader, how much there is of the gospel in the names of our Redeemer. Sweet it is

* Those who wish for farther help for meditation on the names and offices of Christ, will find it in Serle's Horæ Solitariæ, vol. i.; and Goode's Essays on the names of Christ.

to fulfil his dying charge—*This do in remembrance of me.*

Such are those blessed recollections of a Saviour which become us at his table. O how can he but be under the judgment of barrenness, who neglects this ordinance. Surely if *they that be planted in the house of the Lord shall flourish in the courts of our God, bring forth fruit in old age, and be fat and flourishing,* leanness must be the portion of those who disregard or omit this gracious and divine appointment.

CHAPTER VII.

MEDITATIONS DURING THE COMMUNION.

We have given in a former chapter directions for the employment of the mind in the interval while others are partaking of the communion. We will now add a few meditations that may occasionally assist the communicant at that time.

Proverbs iv. 26.—*Ponder the path of thy feet.*

If ever it be needful to ponder my goings, surely it is so on this occasion. Let me inquire then, with what views am I coming to this holy table.

I come, I trust to commemorate the death of Christ; to call to remembrance that sacrifice of himself which he once made upon the cross; to profess my faith in Christ crucified; to declare before God and man that I look to him as my only Saviour and Redeemer, who has made a complete atonement for my sins, and has reconciled my God to me, and me to my God. I come to receive the tokens of reconciliation, and the pledges of pardon and love.

Looking to my Saviour, I come that I may receive

from him all that is wanting in my wretched self. *He is full of grace and truth.* He has called me to do this in remembrance of him; and I come hoping for his blessing on what he himself has appointed.

Looking at myself, I come as an unworthy, sinful, and dreadfully guilty creature, to the fountain opened for sin and uncleanness; not because I am worthy, but because my God is merciful to returning sinners.

Looking at *the society which I join*, the select disciples of Christ, I desire to come feeling that I am the unworthiest and the least of all, and to acknowledge with them our common hope in one Lord, and to partake of their privileges, and enjoy in and with them the communion of saints.

O my Saviour, preserve me from hypocrisy, formality, and self-righteousness; and let me never by my conduct betray thee, while I am professing to embrace thee.

Luke xxii. 19—*This do, in remembrance of me.*

"It is but too apparent, blessed Lord, how apt we are to forget thy great love to us, and thy bitter sufferings for us. Our continual transgressions publish it, and our present stupidity and indevotion do declare it. Praised therefore be thy goodness for these lively emblems of thy most meritorious cross and passion. O that Christ crucified may be now so evidently set forth among us, as to imprint the characters of his love so deep upon our hearts, that neither time nor temptation can obliterate them. Behold, we do here most affectionately call to mind the humility of thine incarnation, the merit of thy death, the power of thy resurrection, and the glories

of thine ascension. Thus, by thine own appointment, gracious Lord, we do shew our thankfulness for thy passion, our faith in thy resurrection, and our hope of thy second coming. We will commemorate thy death, pleading before God that by thy all-sufficient sacrifice, the just anger of the Almighty against us was pacified, testifying before the world, our hope in a crucified Saviour, and renewing our own recollections of thy inexpressible love. O that we may so *do this*, that neither we nor others shall ever become unmindful of thee, and the impression may so remain in our minds, that our lives may witness [we never forget thee." *

2 Tim. ii. 8. *Remember that Jesus Christ, of the seed of David, was raised from the dead.*

May I remember thy death and resurrection, O Jesus, believingly, penitently, and thankfully. *Believingly*,—for "the remembrance of Christ's death, and faith in it, are one and the same thing; what else is faith, but a review and reflection of our thoughts upon Christ? a multiplied and reiterated assent unto the benefits of him crucified? And what is remembrance but the returning back unto the same object. The poor soul that desires to know nothing but him, that accounts all things else but dung in comparison of him, that endeavours to be made conformable unto him in the communion and fellowship of his sufferings, that can in Christ's wounds see his safety, in Christ's stripes see his medicine, in Christ's anguish his peace, in Christ's

* Comber.

cross his triumph, does truly know, and remember him. Lord, give me this experimental, believing remembrance of thyself. *Penitently*—"Consider, O my soul, that it was thy sins which were the associates with Judas, and Pilate, and the Jews, to crucify him. It was thy hypocrisy which was the kiss that betrayed him, thy covetousness the thorns that crowned him, thy oppression and cruelty the nails and spears that pierced him, thy idolatry and superstition the knee that mocked him, thy contempt of religion the spittle that defiled him, thy anger and bitterness the gall that distasted him, thy crimson and redoubled sins the purple that dishonoured him: in a word, thou wert the Jew that killed him."—*Thankfully*—O what inestimable benefits we owe to this death—deliverance from sin and Satan, accursed fiends and the bitter pains of endless woe; restoration to pardon, peace, holiness, communion with God, the society of the blessed, and the joy of heaven through eternity. *Thanks be unto God for his unspeakable gift.**

1 Cor. xi. 24. *This is my body which is broken for you.*

"As soon as I hear these most comfortable and heavenly words spoken and pronounced by the mouth of the minister, 'This is my body which is given for you,' when I hear, I say, this heavenly harmony of God's infallible promises; I look not upon, neither do I behold, bread and wine; for I take and believe the words simply and plainly, even as Christ spake them. For, hearing these words, my

* Altered from Bishop Reynolds.

senses are excluded; faith wholly takes place, and not flesh, nor the carnal imagination of gross eating after the manner of our bodily food, which profits nothing, as Christ witnesses. But with a sorrowful and wounded conscience, a hungry and a thirsty soul, a pure and faithful mind, do I fully embrace, behold, and feed, and look upon that most glorious body of Christ in heaven, at the right hand of God the Father, very God and very man; which was crucified and slain, and his blood shed for our sins, there now making intercession, offering and giving his holy body for me, for my body, for my ransom, for my full price and satisfaction; who is my Christ and all that ever he has. And by this spiritual and faithful eating of this lively and heavenly bread, I feel the most sweet sap and taste of the fruits, and benefits, and unspeakable joys of Christ's death and passion, and fully and inwardly digest them. For my mind is quieted from all worldly adversity, turmoilings, and troubles; my conscience is pacified from sin, death, hell, and damnation; my soul is full, and has even enough, and will no more, for all things are but loss, vile, dung and dross, vain vanity, for the excellent knowledge sake of Christ Jesus my Lord." *

1 Peter v. 1. *The sufferings of Christ.*

"O my Saviour, and my God, I desire to call to mind every part of thy bitter passion. I would begin by recollecting thy lying prostrate on the earth in a cold night, and thy soul's being exceeding sorrowful,

* From R. Samuel's Confession. He was martyred in 1555.

even unto death, and thy grievous agony, in which thou didst sweat drops of blood.

"Thrice did my Redeemer lift up strong cries to his Father, to remove that bitter cup, if it had been his will, and it had been possible for his justice otherwise to be satisfied: and then firmly did he resolve to go through that great work for our sakes. He meekly resigned himself to his Father's will, and readily concurred with his wonderful love to us, in designing to perfect our redemption. He was betrayed by his own disciple, and suffered that traitor who betrayed him, to kiss his blessed lips. He was apprehended, rudely bound, and hurried away as a malefactor, and forsaken by all, not one of his disciples daring to own or stand by him.

"Again, I would remember his being insulted over and treated as the meanest slave, without respect or pity, and carried to and fro, from magistrate to magistrate, from tribunal to tribunal, and everywhere falsely accused. He was buffeted and spit upon, mocked and reviled. He was crowned with thorns, rudely pressed down on his sacred head, and entering into his temples. He was arrayed in a mock habit and a reed put into his hand instead of a sceptre. He was sentenced to death as a criminal, and condemned to the vilest most painful, and reproachful kind of death. He was scourged by merciless hands; the plowers plowing on his back, and making long furrows.

"I would farther contemplate his being loaded with a heavy cross, stripped of his clothes, and fastened to the wood with nails stuck through his hands and feet, the most tender and nervous parts, so that *the iron entered into his very soul.* Thus he was cru-

cified in the midst, between two malefactors, as if the chief criminal. He was then reared up on the cross, and the weight of his body hung on four wounds. He was there suspended, and exposed naked to the view of the world, bearing the shame, as well as the torment of my sin. The precious blood issued out of his wounds, and formed a laver for my sins, and those of the whole world. The extremity of his pain occasioned a feverish heat of the whole body, and his tongue cleaved to the roof of his mouth. He had vinegar given to him when he was thirsty; his soul, in the mean time, more vehemently thirsting after our salvation. He refused the wine and myrrh, as if he would feel all the pain of his crucifixion for us, in its greatest sharpness, without the least mitigation.

"I would call to mind also the tender regard which thou hadst, O my Saviour, in the midst of thy violent pains, for thy holy mother and beloved disciple; the sword pierced through her soul, and deep sorrow wounded his spirit, and extreme anguish overwhelmed them both, to behold the suffering Redeemer; and in the midst of thy sorrows thou thoughtest of them. What gracious comforts also thou vouchsafed the penitent thief in the midst of thy own distress!

"O how great was the inexpressible anguish of our Saviour's soul in beholding the wrath of his Father so hotly flaming against us for those sins of ours, which he did *bear in his own body on the tree*, and that, too, under so great weakness of body, that both made him cry out, *My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me!* He gave up the Ghost, when he might have brought down himself from the cross

and no man could take away his life from him, that the work of our redemption might be finished by him. His blessed side was pierced with a spear, entering into his heart, and letting out the last remains of his blood, that he might give full proof to the world of his being truly dead. His soul was separated from the body, and passed into the state of the dead and of perfect separation, sanctifying that middle state to his servants for their souls to rest in till the resurrection.

"And by all these several sorts and degrees of thy suffering, by all this bitter pain, and sorrow, and shame, and agony, and anguish, which thou didst endure in thy body and in thy soul, for miserable men, and for me a miserable sinner, I now entreat thee to have mercy upon me, and forgive me; to save me, and bless me.

"Since, then, O my Saviour, thou commandest me to commemorate these thy sorrows, and to do this in remembrance of thee; I eat of this bread, and drink of this cup, in remembrance that I have wounded, and grieved, and bruised thee; in remembrance that I have made thee behold the wrath of thy Father, and separated thy precious blood from thy body. But at the same time, the thoughts of thy wonderful love, in the midst of thy pains and sorrows, must yield my soul unspeakable delight. Wherefore, while I am grieved with thy grief, I will feast myself in the pleasures and triumphs of thy love. I will partake of thy torments, and also of thy joys, which thy love did yield in the midst of thy agonies." *

* Altered from a meditation of Bonnell's.

Luke xxii. 44. *And being in an agony, he prayed more earnestly: and his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground.*

"See, O my soul, how thy sin oppresses the Son of God! See how great the horror of it is, that it forced him into agonies, and these agonies vent themselves in a bloody sweat? He saw the wrath of God, that tremendous tempest, ready to burst on thee. He saw the hell thou hadst deserved, and the torments thou hadst merited. He knew the sinfulness of thy sins in their whole extent, and what affronts they have offered to the great Majesty of heaven. Sensible of the infinite purity of God, he knew the heinousness of thy transgressions. He saw the everlasting furnace, the burning lake that was to be thy recompense. He stood in the gap, exposed to that divine wrath which thou hast merited. He became a covert from the tempest, enduring the storm for thee, and bearing thy sins. O how dreadful must have been that agony, from which his body breaks forth into a strange kind of sweat! O my soul, didst thou ever consider what thy sins cost thy Redeemer! Now behold his agony? Now witness this dreadful conflict for thee, and learn ever hereafter to loathe thyself, and to loathe all sin!"*

Isaiah liii. 5. *He was wounded for our transgressions.*

O my Redeemer, kind, unspeakably kind, to poor sinners wert thou, in all thy life, thy sufferings, and thy death. I would ever contemplate the mysteries of thy cross, as satisfying divine justice, expiating

* Horneck.

my sins, and displaying the wonders of divine love. O the love and the wisdom of God, *which none of the princes of this world knew: for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.* They *denied the Holy One and the Just, and desired a murderer to be granted unto them, and killed the Prince of Life.* In every wound would I see another token and proof of thy tenderness and grace. "Let thy wounds then prove the most powerful remedies to rid me of my corruptions! When any impure thoughts rise in me, let thinking of thy wounds crush them; when sluggishness in religion assaults me, let thy wounds and the remembrance of them make me vigilant in thy service; and when in the holy sacrament I think of thy wounds, let all my vain imaginations expire."

Let me then ever remember Christ. "He did not forget us. He thought of us in his own extremity. At his death he regarded us more than he did himself. He put up many a petition for us, but few for himself. In the garden, on the cross, and in the grave, his lost sheep were still in his mind. He thought of them both day and night." And from the height of his glory, amid the worship of the heavenly world, the Saviour still regards his people on earth. "Unworthy as they are, he loves them; mean as they are, he is not ashamed to wear their form, and call them brethren. He forgets the songs of angels, to listen to their sighs and prayers. It is his delight to minister to their wants, to protect them in their dangers, and to comfort them in their sorrows."* O may I never forget his love!

* See Bradley's Sermons.

Heb. ii. 9. *We see Jesus who was made a little lower than the angels, for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour.*

Heavenly Father! grant that thy Holy Spirit may bring to my remembrance all that which Christ did for me, whenever I go to his table; so that by the eye of faith, I too may see the suffering and glorified Redeemer. Blessed Redeemer! I desire to call to mind thy glory before the world was, thy love in undertaking the work of our redemption, thy birth of a lowly virgin, thy life of sorrow, thy shame and contempt, thy rejection by man, thy bloody sweat and agony, thy crown of thorns, thy stripes, the nails in thy hands and thy feet, thy cross and all thy passion, thy painful death, and thy burial in the tomb, and the sin of man as the cause of these thy humiliations and sufferings. O how unmeasurable is thy love! It *is strong as death—many waters cannot quench it.* It was not the nails that fastened thee to the cross, but something more firm and binding; thy love fixed thee and kept thee there, till thou gavest up the ghost; otherwise every fetter that man could have devised would have been utterly unavailing. I call to mind yet farther, thy glorious resurrection and ascension, thy leading captivity captive and receiving gifts for men, thy sitting at the right hand of the Father, thy mediation, the future judgment, and the glory yet to come; and recalling these things to mind, may I afresh learn to hate and flee from every sin, to trust in thee, and prepare to meet thee. Thus may my hope of being with thee for ever, be enlivened and established, and thus may my

affections towards thee and man be afresh enkindled and enlarged.

John i. 29. *Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world.*

Contemplate, O my soul, thy Saviour as a Lamb slain for thee. "Rightly is he called a Lamb, whose innocence was spotless, and his meekness and patience invincible; and the Lamb of God, for his superior excellence and dignity, and his being chosen to this office by the Father. *He was led as a lamb to the slaughter; and as a sheep before his shearers is dumb, so he opened not his mouth:* neither guile nor complaint was found in him. Dost thou then profess thyself a follower of the Lamb, and glory in the title? Learn then of him to be harmless and blameless, meek and lowly in heart, alike averse from doing and deserving evil, and ready to suffer it.

"But how does the Lamb of God take away sin? By bearing it *in his own body on the tree; the chastisement of our peace was upon him.* O heavy load which sunk the Son of God in his human body to the grave; and had it lain unremoved, would have sunk the whole world in ruins! *Worthy is the Lamb that was slain, to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing.*" *

1 Peter ii. 21. *Christ also suffered for us.*

"The pains of his wounds were his, but ours is the benefit; the sufferings of his death were his, but ours is the mercy; the stripes on his back were his, but the balm that issued from them is ours; the thorns on

* Grove.

his head were his, but the crown is ours; the holes in his hands and side were his, but the blood that ran out was ours; in a word, the price was his, but the purchase ours. The corn is not grinded, nor baked, nor broken for itself; the grape is not bruised, nor pressed for itself. These actions rather destroy the nature of the elements than perfect them; but all these violations that they suffer are for the benefit of man. No marvel then if the angels themselves stoop and gaze upon so deep a mystery, in which it is impossible to decide whether is greater, the wonder or the mercy." *

Luke xxiii. 42. *And he said unto Jesus, Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom.*

O suffering Saviour! like the dying thief would I look to thee with this petition. Thou that saved him, and declared to him, *This day shalt thou be with me in paradise:* O do thou make me also an illustrious trophy of thy mighty grace. I would look to thy wounds for my pardon, to thy merits alone for my justification. I acknowledge, I feel that I deserve nothing; but, Jesus, remember me, even me, amid the assembled millions who will stand before thee in judgment at the great day of account. And, O may I never forget thee; but, filled with a sense of thy love, spend my whole time and strength, and all I am, and all I have, for my Redeemer.

John vi. 56. *He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him.*

In such a passage, let me never rest in the outward emblem, but look through the figure to the truth, and

* Bishop Reynolds.

by the sign, realize the thing signified. Our Lord has assured me his words here are *spirit* and *life*. May I then have a spiritual appetite for this spiritual food; O may thy Holy Spirit give me a just and lively sense of my guilt and misery, and of my great need of Christ, so that I may earnestly long for, and, as with a keen and discriminating appetite, hunger and thirst after his salvation. I would now by faith realize, and receive out of, that fulness which there is in him for our use. He took upon him my nature and is touched with a feeling of my infirmities. He is my Shepherd, who laid down his life for me. He shed his blood for me, a miserable sinner, and that *blood cleanses from all sin. He is the propitiation for our sins, giving himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God, for a sweet-smelling savour.* He is my priest, who having made atonement for my sins, now intercedes in my behalf. He is my complete Saviour, delivering me from all my sins. He has wisdom, power, grace, and compassion, adapted to all my wants. His love *passeth knowledge.* I believe this from my very heart. I rely upon him as my only Saviour. I would now, through the bread and wine, view afresh the atoning death of my Lord. My eyes look unto thee, O gracious Redeemer. O my soul, and all that is within me, praise and magnify the Lord, who died, who rose again, who intercedes for thee, and who is now present in the assembly of his people. Thus let me abide in thee, and do thou give me thy Spirit, and dwell in my heart by faith; thus may I enjoy an increasing communion with thee as my all-satisfying portion, my joy, and my strength; thus may my appetite for the world and its pleasures be taken away; and may I find thee, O Christ, and

thy salvation, to be *meat indeed*, and *drink indeed*, to my needy soul, reviving all my dying graces, refreshing my fainting spirit, and strengthening me vigorously to fulfil every duty.

Matt. xxvi. 26. *Take, eat; this is my body.*

"O blessed tidings to the poor distressed soul, famished with feeding on husks and vanity. Behold, thou sayest, *Take eat*, offering thyself unto me, and commanding me to feast on thine own flesh, on thy all-sufficient atonement, yea, on all thy merits and graces. Lord! thou tenderest most freely what I need infinitely, and that which I desire above all things. Adored be thy wonderful bounty, in compliance wherewith, (unworthy as I am) I yet stretch out a trembling hand to take hold of Christ. O may I now receive Jesus as my Lord, believe on his name, and live upon his fulness." *

I want to receive thee, O Jesus, and all thy great salvation; and to view thy atonement, thy righteousness, thy intercession; thy present power, thy future return, and the glory to be thus revealed, as the life-giving, cheering, delightful, and all-reviving truths on which my soul is intently fixed, and in the contemplation of which it eagerly dwells and lives, rejoices and waxes stronger and stronger day by day. O may I thus learn to nauseate all the poor husks on which I have formerly lived, and evermore feed on Christ the true bread of life.

Isa. lvi. 4. *Take hold of my covenant.*

The Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ is indeed a glorious covenant, a rich dispensation of grace and

* Comber.

blessing, a better and more excellent covenant than the law of Moses: effected and ratified by a sacrifice incomparably great and glorious. This covenant is everlasting, complete, and sure. By faith in Jesus, the appointed mediator of this plan of salvation, I would now take hold of it, that all its purposed and promised mercies may be mine. I would take hold of it, as the drowning man seizes the rope thrown out to him. Relinquishing every other hope. I desire to *win Christ, and be found in him.* As the shipwrecked mariner gladly leaves his sinking vessel, and hastens to enter that life-boat which rises above the stormy waves, and bears him in safety to the shore: so would I, leaving every thing else, enter the true life-boat which will never sink, in full assurance of hope, that it will bring me safe to the heavenly shore. Gladly do I fly for refuge to the only sure hope of man—redemption through the blood of Christ.

2 Cor. v. 4. *In this tabernacle we groan, being burdened.*

Burdened by temptation and sin, weary and heavy laden by many corruptions, I this day again cast my sinful soul at the foot of the cross.

The disappointments of life are trying to nature, but I feel two things strongly: First, that I can receive no denial, and no sorrow, which I do not deserve: and, secondly, that every denial and sorrow is in wisdom and love. I will not then fret against the Lord; but will, by his grace, rejoice in him and his ways.

But O, when I look at my sins and corruptions, at my neglected duties, at my self-indulgent ways, and

at my fostered corruptions within, the real surprise is that God should bear with me at all, or in any way use me in his service. I am struck with the power of that direction of my Saviour—*Remember Lot's wife!* She did not return to Sodom, she did but look back: the thoughts of her mind, the wishes of her heart, were there. O keep me then from inward thoughts of the corruptions from which I have been delivered.

I will then meekly acquiesce in all that God sends. I need many blows; my Father sees my perverseness, my waywardness, and rebellions, but he deals very gently with me; when I deserve to be for ever cast off, he chastises me to bring me to himself, and he gives me the gracious promise: *I will heal their backslidings, I will love them freely, for mine anger is turned away.* Let this unspeakably precious promise be wholly realised to my soul.

Mal. iv. 2. *Unto you that fear my name shall the Sun of Righteousness arise with healing in his wings.*

O divine Sun! thou hast brought life and immortality to light through the Gospel, and hast proclaimed to the world the acceptable year of the Lord. O Thou, the great Luminary of our hope and of our faith, thou art to us not the Sun of legal, but the Sun of evangelical righteousness. Not an unfriendly star, a frightful light, a consuming fire; but thou art the Sun of grace and of mercy, communicating liberally to all the world, both to the old and the new, the benign and salutary influences of thy light and heat, and bringest to the sick healing in thy wings. Thus, O Sun of Righteousness! thou art our Phy-

sician, who by thy powerful operation healeth us of the wounds made by the old serpent. Thou art truly our Mercy-seat, under whose shadow we find the needful refreshment and shelter from the wrath of God and our own conscience.

By Thee we see things, which eye hath not seen, nor ear hath heard, neither have entered into the heart of man the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. Thou enlightenest the eyes of our understanding, that we may know what is the hope of thy calling, and what the riches of the glory of thy inheritance in the saints. Thou pervadest our hearts by thy powerful light. Thou purgest our consciences by the virtue of thy beams. Thou makest us new creatures, and thou also createst for us *a new heaven and a new earth*.—DRELINCOURT.

Psalm xxxix. 7. *And now, Lord, what wait I for?*

God has graciously promised, *Ask, and ye shall have*. I believe his promise; and while waiting on him at his table, would now implore his grace.

Lord! I wait for the increase of FAITH. Lord, help me more clearly to apprehend divine truths, and to be more distinct and firm in my assurance of them. I desire to attend at thy table with a lively faith in the merits of my Redeemer. I would look up to Jesus, and trust in him with entire and full confidence, as having ransomed me from sin and death, and procured for me life and salvation with his own precious blood. O give me faith to trust solely in thy mercy through Christ for acceptance, and earnestly to look for the aid of the Spirit, to teach and to purify me.

Lord, I wait to receive STRENGTH to overcome my spiritual enemies. I know myself to be weak, helpless, and insufficient for any good work. But if I abide in Christ, he has said that I shall bear much fruit. Through this ordinance let me be drawn near to him, and led to abide more in him, so that my affections to the world may be deadened, and my whole soul may be refreshed and strengthened.

Lord, I wait hungering and thirsting for thy SALVATION, in all its grace and fulness. O that the blood of Christ may speak peace to my troubled heart! O that the gladdening light of thy countenance may shine on me, and the sense of thy peculiar presence be felt in my heart! O that here I may clearly see that Christ is mine and I am his—that the Holy Spirit may be largely given unto me, and I may have a full assurance of hope that my sins are pardoned and my soul is saved.

Lord, I wait for the SPIRIT OF ADOPTION. I would come to thy table as a child goes to an affectionate and tender parent, feeling that thou hast a father's love to me, and having the tempers and disposition of a loving child towards thee. O give me a filial even a confiding, reverential, loving and obedient spirit. Let me look up to thee, my heavenly Father, for the bread of life, in full assurance that thou wilt not send me away empty.

Now, Lord, *truly my hope is in thee* for the supply of all my spiritual wants. Give me that which thou seest would be good for me: and thus shall I be blessed not only now, but all my life long, and in death, and through eternity.

1 Cor. v. 7, 8. *Christ, our passover, is sacrificed for us, therefore let us keep the feast; not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.*

"The selection of the Pascal Lamb was significant of the Saviour's appointment by the Father to the work of our redemption. The injunction that the selected animal should be without spot or blemish, set forth his holy nature and freedom from all sin. The command to keep it up for three days before it was killed, was significant of the trial to be made of the spirit of the Lord in his ministry previous to his death on the cross. The shedding of its blood prefigured that death. The injunction to roast it with fire, denoted the Saviour's subjection to the wrath of God because of sin. So also, the direction to eat it, and to eat it entire, was expressive of the command to believe in Christ, to receive him into our hearts by faith, to live on him by faith, and to rest on him altogether for salvation; not doubting that God will spare us for his sake when judgment is poured out on the world because of sin."* Like the Israelites, may I partake of this feast, and then, without delay, pursue my journey, under the guidance of Christ, to the Heavenly Canaan.

In Christ, our Passover, I have a light and blessedness, far superior to that which the Israelites had. The Lord has come, has died, has risen again, and is interceding for us; that we may be with him; he

* See Phillips' Introduction to the Lord's Supper.

gives us now his Spirit as the earnest of our inheritance, and bread and wine as pledges of our escape from the wrath to come, and obtaining salvation at his coming.

If the Jews were very diligent in putting away the unleavened bread out of their houses before the passover, O how much more diligent should I be to put away the leaven of sin from my heart. May I search out, and cast away far from me that pride and malice which puff and sour the heart. Let me, looking at this sacrifice, learn to walk in meekness and lowliness, uprightness and integrity of heart, living in holy joy and praise before God, and in sincere kindness and love unfeigned to all my fellow creatures.

1 Peter i. 5, 6. *Salvation ready to be revealed in the last time, wherein we greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness.*

"Most merciful Jesus, although thou reservest the full manifestation of thy love to my soul till the glorious resurrection, yet, as if thou wert impatient of so great a delay, thou here givest me a pledge of thy love, and an earnest of my title to a never-fading bliss. Thou hast dearly bought it for me, and thou hast freely given it to me; wherefore I will vigorously seek it, patiently wait for it, and earnestly expect it. Ah! my gracious Redeemer, here I am vexed with crosses, oppressed with enemies, troubled with corruptions, and tossed on the waves of a thousand sins and miseries. But it is my comfort, amid all these sorrows, to receive this assurance, that I shall, ere long, be translated into a blissful state

never to know sin, or feel pain; to be in danger of enemies, or fear of evil any more. O how welcome shall be that blessed hour that summons me to enter into the joys of my Lord! While I continue here, let me behave myself, O my Saviour, as the heir of thy kingdom, crucifying those sins that crucified thee, and would exclude me from those felicities which thou hast offered me. Lord, I would hate every thing that keeps me from heaven, and love nothing but what may further me in my way thither. O give me thy grace to live as one that is above all the trifling pleasures and sorrows of this lower world, and to conduct myself as becomes an heir of glory, as one designed to be a companion of angels, and to partake of thy bliss for ever and ever."*

Psalm xvii. 3. *I am purposed that my mouth shall not transgress.*

Lord, I come TO RENEW MY VOWS, (too often, alas! broken,) and to repeat my baptismal promises, that I would renounce the Devil and all his works, the pomps and vanities of this wicked world, and all the sinful lusts of the flesh. I come to profess my belief in all the articles of the Christian faith, and my resolution to obey God's holy will and commandments.

I desire to come with the lowest SELF-ABASEMENT, as sensible that I am unworthy of the least mercy, and am yet admitted to the table of the Heavenly Father, with his children. I would come, feeling that I am poor, naked, and destitute, and admiring

* Comber.

the riches of divine mercy towards so rebellious a creature.

I would come, AT PEACE with all the world. I trust there is no one justly offended with me; or if there be such, no one to whom I would not make all Christian submission, confession, and reparation. And I trust that I can appeal to thee, thou Searcher of hearts, that I feel no enmity, or ill-will to any human being; but by divine grace, from my heart I do forgive and will forgive every offence against me, be it more than seventy times repeated. Should anything of a contrary temper now, or ever, prevail, O enable me to struggle against it, and overcome it.

I would come with a firm purpose, through thy grace, to forsake every sin, and give myself entirely to thee, to be guided by thy good Spirit, to be directed by thy holy word, to be saved by thy dear Son, and to glorify thy holy name by my whole life, conduct and conversation.

Luke xxiii. 34. *Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do.*

O thou gracious Redeemer, the Prince of Peace; thou compassionate Saviour, the Lord of Glory; give me grace so that I may ever hereafter show myself loving and mild to all my enemies, pardon them from my heart, earnestly pray for them, and seek to do them good.

O Jesus! let me never harbour one rancorous, malicious, or unkind thought in that heart, in which I trust thou, the loving Saviour, now dwellest by faith. But may I become more like thee, O Christ, in my spirit and behaviour towards all with whom I

have to deal. Shalt thou freely forgive, and wonderfully extenuate such aggravated injuries as were inflicted on thee; and shall not I freely forgive the infinitely smaller trespasses that may be committed against me? O let me have *the same mind that was in Christ.*

Luke xxiii. 28. *Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for me, but weep for yourselves and for your children.*

In the midst of his misery, Jesus forgets not mercy; in the midst of all the tortures and scorn of his enemies, he can hear his following friends weeping behind him, and neglect all his own sufferings to comfort them. We read before, that he would not vouchsafe a word to Pilate that threatened him, nor to Herod that entreated him; and yet mark, how graciously doth he turn to these weeping women, affording them looks and words too, both of compassion and consolation, *Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for me, but for yourselves.* And yet observe he did not turn his face to them, until he heard them weep; nor may we think to see his face in glory, unless we first bathe our eyes in sorrow. It is a wonder to me, that any in our age should ever decry tears, remorse, contrition, compunction. How many saints do we find, both in the Old and New Testaments, confuting this by their practices. The promise tells us, *they that sow in tears, shall reap in joy; he that* follows Christ, or, *goeth forth weeping, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him.*

But what's the meaning of this, "*Weep not for me?*" May we not weep for the death of Christ?

Do we not find in scripture, that all the people wept at the death of Moses, that all the church wept at the death of Stephen?—I answer, the words are not absolute but comparative. Christ pointed the women to the true cause of all their sorrow, which was their sins; and thus we have cause to weep indeed. Our sins were the cause of the sufferings of Christ; and in that respect, O that our heads were fountains, and our eyes rivers of tears! O, the curse that our sins have brought on Jesus Christ! Christians would not your hearts rise against him, that should kill your father, mother, brother, wife, husband? O then how should your hearts and souls rise against sin! Surely your sin it was that murdered Christ, that killed him who is instead of all relations, who is a thousand times dearer to you, than father, mother, husband, child. One thought of this methinks, should be enough to make you say, as Job did, "*I abhor myself in dust and ashes.*" With a spiritual eye, I see no other engine tormenting Christ; no other Pilate, Herod, Annas, Caiaphas, condemning Christ; no other soldiers, officers, Jews, or Gentiles, doing execution on Christ—but only sin. O my sins, my sins!—*Ambrose.*

Phil. iii. 10. *Being made conformable unto his death.*

Let us conform to Jesus in respect of his sufferings and death; looking unto Jesus is effective of this. Come then, and let us look to Christ, and conform to HIS HUMILITY; that the most high God of gods should vouchsafe to be contemned, and less esteemed than Barabbas a murderer: that Christ should be crucified between two thieves, as if he had been the

ring-leader of all malefactors: O what humility was this!—let us conform to HIS PATIENCE; *Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example that we should follow his steps;—who when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not, but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously.* O the patience of Christ!—let us confirm to HIS LOVE: *Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.* This love is an examplar of all love, it is the fire that should kindle all our sparks: *Be ye followers of God,* saith the apostle *as dear children, and walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us, an offering and sacrifice to God for a sweet smelling savour.* Let us learn of him, for he is meek and lowly; "as a lamb before the shearer is dumb, so he opened not his mouth:" let us conform to HIS OBEDIENCE. *He became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.* He sought not his own will, but the will of him that sent him.

We must conform to Christ in HIS SUFFERINGS, if he calls us to them, and by reason of this conformity we have communion with Christ in all these particulars. 1. We have Christ's strength to bear sufferings. 2. His victories to overcome sufferings. 3. His intercession to preserve us from falling away in sufferings. 4. His compassion, to proportion our sufferings to the measure of strength which he has given us. 5. His Spirit to draw in the same yoke with us, and to hold us under all sufferings, that we sink not. 6. His graces to be more glorious by our sufferings: as a torch when it is shaken shines the brighter. 7. His crown to reward our sufferings, when we shall have tasted our measure of them.—*Ambrose.*

Phil. ii. 5. *Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus.*

What are the means of being like Christ in his death? I answer,

1. Go to the cross of Jesus Christ. It is not all our resolutions, promises, vows, endeavors, without this, that will effect our conformity to Christ in his death. This conformity is a fruit of the death of Christ, and therefore whosoever would have this work wrought in him, let him first have recourse to Christ's cross.

2. Look up to him that hangs upon it, contemplate the death of Jesus Christ; consider seriously his bitter, shameful, painful sufferings. Consider who he was: what he suffered: why he suffered: for whom he suffered: for what end he suffered: with what mind he suffered. Every one of these will make some discoveries either of his graces, or of his gracious actings in our behalf; and who can tell how far this very look may work in us, to change us and transform us into the image of Jesus Christ.

3. Let us humbly bewail our defect and inconformity, either to the graces, sufferings, or death of Christ.

4. Let us quicken, provoke, and rouse up our souls to this conformity; let us set before them exciting arguments: as for instance:—The greatest glory that a Christian can attain to in this world, is to have a resemblance to Jesus Christ. Again, the more like we are to Christ, the better he is pleased with us. Again, a likeness to Christ in his death, will cause a likeness to Christ in his glory: *if we have been*

planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection. Thus let us quicken and provoke our souls to this conformity.

5. Let us pray to God that he will make us conformable to Jesus Christ. Is it grace we want? Let us beg of him, that of that fulness which is in Christ, we may in our measure receive grace for grace. Is it patience, or joy in sufferings that we want? Let us beg of him that as he has promised, he will send us the Comforter, that we may follow Christ cheerfully, from His cross to His crown, from earth to heaven. Is it mortification our souls pant after? This indeed, makes us most like to Christ in his sufferings and death; why then, pray we for this mortification.—*Ambrose.*

Isa. liii. 12. *He bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.*

O surpassing love! While his cruel enemies are driving the nails into his suffering limbs; while they are numbering him with malefactors and hanging his suffering body on the tree, his full heart of love, discerning all the blinding effects of sin, and all its awful issues in their own future misery, was earnestly pleading with his Heavenly Father in their behalf. Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do. Nor did he plead in vain, for soon 3000 and soon 5000, pricked to their hearts under their enormous sins in desiring a murderer to be granted to them, and killing the Prince of life, believed the word of God and had full forgiveness of all their sins.

The Lord give to me then love like this love, and ever enable me for injuries return benefits, and for

curses to return prayers and blessings. May I look too on the people of Israel as my Saviour looked upon them. May I behold all the miseries which their sins have brought upon them, and pour out my heart in prayer for Israel as Jesus did, giving the Lord no rest till he make Jerusalem a praise in the earth. As the Church has taught me especially on the day we commemorate his death, to pray that God would have mercy on all Jews, Turks, Infidels, and Heretics, so would I while at his Table pray for them and all the enemies of Christ, entreating him that at length the fulness of the Gentiles may come in and all Israel be saved.

MEDITATIONS ON THE FESTIVALS OF THE CHURCH.

CHRISTMAS-DAY.

Luke xxii. 19. ***This is my body, which is given for you.***

And was the Son of God made in the likeness of sinful flesh, so that his sacred body might be given for me? O glorious ransom price for my recovery! Most complete must be that redemption for which so great a price was paid. Yes, Christ, my Lord, whose name is called Wonderful, Counsellor, The Mighty God, The Everlasting Father, and The Prince of Peace, was born of a virgin, and took our nature upon him, that he might, by suffering for sin, satisfy the justice, and appease the righteous anger of a holy God! And to what a life was this holy Child

Jesus born! O Jesus, I would now recollect that thy body was given to weariness, labour, painfulness, and watchings oft. It was given to treatment most shameful and most tormenting; to spitting, smiting, and cruel mockings; to the lashes of the whip, to the thorns, the nails, the cross, the spear, death, and the grave. All this, and thy Father's sensible and felt desertion, was suffered for us men, and for our salvation. Thus my body was redeemed from the power of sin and Satan, and recovered to light, life, and joy. Precious Saviour! the gift of thy body procures for me pardon and peace. O then let me give my body and soul to thee! let them not any longer be yielded to the degrading service of sin, but become wholly thine. Expel every enemy of thine and of mine; and come, blessed Redeemer, and dwell in my heart by faith every day. May love to thee fill and pervade my whole soul, and constrain me to live wholly to thee.

EASTER DAY.

1 Cor. xv. 20. *Now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the first-fruits of them that slept.*

While we specially at the Lord's table, seem to sit at the foot of the cross, and commemorate our Saviour's death, we may still rejoice in the recollection that *Christ is indeed risen.* If Christ were not raised, then truly *faith* in him *is vain,* and we are yet in our sins. But never was a fact so fully proved and established as this fact was. Let me then now contemplate this great and all-important fact. His resurrection is the foundation of my hope; it declares

him to be the Son of God, and a Redeemer mighty to save; it shows that we are justified and secured from condemnation, and is the means of our spiritual life. O Lord, my God, not only give me a firm and unshaken confidence in this great fact; but grant that I may remember it with unfeigned gratitude, and let me receive from my risen Saviour, all those blessings which he is exalted to bestow.

But especially would I derive comfort from looking at his resurrection, as a type and pledge of the believer's rising from the grave. As he rose, so shall we rise also. How cheering to the mind awakened to a sense of the nearness and magnitude of eternity, is the conviction that through Christ death has now lost its sting, and the grave its victory. *Whosoever believeth in him shall never die.* Death shall be but the gate of life, the beginning of endless joy.

Rom. iv. 25. *Who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification.*

"I will go thy table with joy, and tell out thy works with gladness, O most mighty Saviour, who has not only died for my sins, but risen again for my justification. Indeed, what comfort would I have found in this memorial of thy death, if it had not been for thy resurrection. This sacrament then would only have represented thy sufferings, and renewed my sorrow, to think that so excellent a person had failed of my deliverance! but now it is become a feast of joy, because it is an assurance of thy resurrection, as well as a commemoration of thy passion. Since thou livest, glorified Jesus, we

live also. Thy resurrection gives life to our hopes, makes our sorrows light, our lives cheerful, and our death the gate of immortality. Our fears are dispelled, and our troubled hearts are quieted with this, *The Lord* is risen; yea, *the Lord is risen indeed.*" *

ASCENSION DAY.

Luke xxiv. 51. *And it came to pass, while he blessed them, he was parted from them, and carried up into heaven.*

How full of love, even to the end, was our adorable Lord! The last words sounding in the ears of his disciples was a blessing. He ascended to heaven blessing them, and is still the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever. O ascended Saviour, may my heart rise whither thou art gone; and now Christ is gone to heaven, may my affections be set on things above. *I know that my Redeemer liveth.* This is a blessed confidence that can support the soul in the severest trials. He makes himself known too *in the breaking of bread.* I would not then only remember his death; but looking at his ascension, see the power given to him, mark the gifts which he has received, dwell upon the work which he is now carrying on, and daily come to him, and hold communion with him.

Remember, too, O my soul, *this same Jesus which* was thus *taken up into heaven,* shall *so come in like manner* as he was seen *going into heaven.* Now at his table, I profess my expectation of his coming again. O may I be always ready for that day. The Lord in

* Comber.

mercy grant that this sacred institution may raise my heart to my ascended Saviour, and lead me to look and diligently prepare for, his second coming.

WHIT-SUNDAY.

Acts xix. 2. *Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed?*

Where true faith is, there are also the gracious influences of the Spirit. O may I so believe as to receive the Holy Spirit, which is the seal of God, (Eph. i. 13.) shewing who are his redeemed people. Give unto me all the evidences that distinguish those who have received this gift. *They are born of the Spirit.* O Lord, produce in me the new heart and the new spirit, the daily turning from darkness to light, from sin to holiness, and from the world to God my Saviour. *They have the spirit of prayer.* O raise my heart constantly to thee in holy aspirations through the day, and give me real desires after thee in public, family, and social worship, so that I may never be content with a formal round of duties. *They mortify the deeds of the body.* The Lord grant that I too may strive against every temptation, resist sin, and never yield to carnal indulgences. *They bring forth the fruits of righteousness.* Oh that I may manifestly bear the fruit of love, joy, peace, gentleness, goodness, meekness, long-suffering, faith, and temperance.

O Lord, my heavenly Father, I would feel and acknowledge that though, through thy great mercy, I am not, I trust, wholly barren of spiritual fruit, yet there is little indeed brought forth that may glorify

God, and adorn the doctrine of my Saviour. O thou who hearest prayer, and givest good things to them that ask, give me, give thy church, give unto all flesh, largely and fully, that best gift—thy Holy Spirit.

Behold, thy Spirit hath converted and sanctified millions; let me therefore, together with thy whole church, receive here such portions of thy Holy Spirit, as may suppress our evil affections, revive our dead hearts, comfort our dejected minds, and turn our ignorance, disobedience, and sorrow, into knowledge, and practice, and holy joy. Let the Spirit rest upon me, and dwell in me for ever, so that I may always have cause to bless thee for so incomparable a gift.

TRINITY-SUNDAY.

Ephes. ii. 18. *Through him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father.*

Jesus our Lord, having reconciled us to God by the cross, may I practically know what it is to have access unto him, through Christ, by the Spirit. I desire to know the great and glorious doctrine of this day, not as a matter of theory, or belief merely, but as a thing of experience, and daily practice. Deliver me from a proud and presumptuous spirit, that would cavil at thy truth. Deliver me from a too curious and prying spirit, that would attempt to comprehend that which it has not pleased thee fully to reveal. Give me grace in all simplicity of heart to receive what thou hast declared, and feeling my own ignorance and nothingness, to adore thee in

thy incomprehensible Majesty and unsearchable glory.

Almighty God, our heavenly Father, I come to thee as one who spared not thy beloved Son for us, and art now reconciled by him; and I beseech thee, receive, provide for, and bless me.

Blessed Redeemer, thou art the Way, the Truth, and the Life; my Mediator, and my Advocate, my hope is in thy merits and thy intercession.

Holy Spirit, the Comforter, who shewest the Saviour to sinners, I look to thee to teach and guide, to purify, strengthen, and console me.

CHAPTER VIII.

TEXTS SELECTED FOR MEDITATION, AND ARRANGED UNDER DIFFERENT HEADS.

THE frequent recurrence of the duty of attending at the Lord's table, makes it desirable to have a greater variety in the subjects of pious reflection, than the preceding meditations furnish; still, however, keeping in mind the main point to be dwelt upon at the Lord's table, the death of Christ as a sacrifice for sin. In this view, the following passages of scripture have been selected, that the communicant may from time to time choose those subjects of contemplation, which may be most adapted to the present state of his mind, and yet have his eye chiefly fixed on Christ. Younger Christians may find it advantageous to commit to their memory some of these passages. David says, *Thy word have I hid in my heart, that I might not sin against thee.*

I.—THE LOVE OF GOD.

John iii. 16. God so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

1 John iii. 16. Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us.

1 John iv. 10. Herein is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.

Rom. v. 8. God commendeth his love towards us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.

Rom. viii. 32. He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things.

Isaiah lxiii. 7. I will mention the loving-kindness of the Lord, and the praises of the Lord, according to all that the Lord hath bestowed on us, and the great goodness toward the house of Israel, which he hath bestowed on them according to his mercies, and according to the multitude of his loving kindnesses.

Isaiah xlix. 15, 16. Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? yea, they may forget, yet will I not forget thee.

Behold, I have graven thee on the palms of my hands; thy walls are continually before me.

2.—THE LOVE OF CHRIST.

John xv. 13. Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for friends.

Rom. v. 10. When we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son.

Eph. iii. 18, 19. To comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height, and to know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge.

Eph. v. 2. Christ hath also loved us, and hath given himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God, for a sweet-smelling savour.

John xv. 9. As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you: continue ye in my love.

2 Cor. v. 14. The love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead.

John xiii. 1. Having loved his own which were in the world, he loved them unto the end.

Rev. i. 5, 6. Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father, to him be glory and dominion, for ever and ever. Amen.

3.—THE SUFFERINGS OF CHRIST.

Isaiah lii. 14, 15. His visage was so marred more than any man, and his form more than the sons of men: so shall he sprinkle many nations.

Isaiah liii. 3. He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief.

Isaiah liii. 10. It pleased the Lord to bruise him; he hath put him to grief; when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed.

Matt. xxvi. 38. Then saith he unto them, My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death.

Lam. i. 12. Is it nothing to you, all ye that pass by? behold, and see if there be any sorrow like unto my sorrow which is done unto me, wherewith the Lord hath afflicted me, in the day of his fierce anger.

Heb. xii. 2. Who for the joy that was set before him, endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.

Luke xxiii. 33. And when they were come to the place which is called Calvary, there they crucified him, and the malefactors, one on the right hand, and the other on the left.

John xix. 34. One of the soldiers with a spear, pierced his side; and forthwith came thereout blood and water.

1 Cor. xv. 3, 4. Christ died for our sins, according to the scriptures, and that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day.

Luke xxiv. 26. Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory?

4.—THE ATONEMENT OF CHRIST.

Isaiah liii. 6. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way, and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.

Isaiah liii. 8. He was cut off out of the land of the living: for the transgression of my people was he stricken.

Matt. xx. 28. The Son of Man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many.

Rom. iv. 25. Who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification.

Rom. v. 6. When we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly.

Eph. i. 7. We have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace.

1 Tim. ii. 6. Who gave himself a ransom for all.

Heb. ix. 28. Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many.

1 John ii. 1, 2. If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous; and he is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.

Rev. v. 9. Thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood, out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation.

Exodus xii. 23. When he seeth the blood, the Lord will not suffer the destroyer to come in unto your houses to smite you.

Rom. v. 10. We were reconciled to God by the death of his Son.

Col. i. 19, 20. It pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell; and having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things to himself.

Heb. ii. 17. A merciful and faithful High Priest,—to make reconciliation for the sins of the people.

5.—THE WORK OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.

John xv. 26. When the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me.

John xvi. 8. When he is come, he shall reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment.

Rom. viii. 9. If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.

Rom. v. 5. The love of God is shed abroad in our hearts, by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us.

1 Cor. xii. 3. No man can say that Jesus is the Lord but by the Holy Ghost.

John xvi. 7. It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you: but if I depart, I will send him unto you.

2 Cor. iii. 17. Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty.

2 Cor. iii. 18. But we all, with open face, beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image, from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.

Gal. v. 22, 23. The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance.

6.—THE NEW COVENANT.

Heb. viii. 10—12. This is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord; I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts, and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people.

And they shall not teach every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord; for all shall know me, from the least to the greatest.

For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more.

Heb. xii. 22—24. Ye are come unto Mount Zion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels.

To the general assembly and church of the first born, which are written in heaven, and to God the judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect.

And to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel.

Jer. xxxii. 40, 41. I will make an everlasting covenant with them, that I will not turn away from them to do them good; but I will put my fear in their hearts, and they shall not depart from me.

Yea, I will rejoice over them to do them good, and I will plant them in this land assuredly, with my whole heart, and with my whole soul.

7.—FAITH IN CHRIST.

John vi. 29. This is the work of God, that ye believe on Him whom he hath sent.

John xi. 27. I believe that thou art the Christ, the Son of God, which should come into the world.

John vi. 68, 69. Thou hast the words of eternal life, and we believe and are sure that thou art the Christ the Son of the living God.

Rom. iv. 20, 21. He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief, but was strong in faith giving glory to God;

And being fully persuaded that what he had promised he was able also to perform.

Gal. ii. 20. The life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.

Eph. iii. 17. That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith.

John i. 12. As many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name.

Heb. xii. 2. Looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith.

Rom. iii. 25. Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood.

8.—REPENTANCE.

Zech. xii. 10. They shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn.

Rom. ii. 4. The goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance.

Acts v. 31. Him hath God exalted with his right hand, to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins.

Luke xxiv. 46. It behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day; and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.

Isaiah lv. 7. Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts, and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him, and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.

Jer. iii. 22. Return—and I will heal your backslidings.

Hosea vi. 1. Come, and let us return unto the Lord; for he hath torn, and he will heal us; he hath smitten, and he will bind us up.

2 Cor. vii. 10, 11. Godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of: but the sorrow of the world worketh death.

For behold this self-same thing that ye sorrowed after a godly sort, what carefulness it wrought in you; yea, what clearing of yourselves; yea, what indignation; yea, what fear; yea, what vehement desire; yea, what zeal; yea, what revenge.

9.—THE FORGIVENESS OF SINS.

Psalm cxxx. 4. There is forgiveness with thee, that thou mayest be feared.

Daniel ix. 9. To the Lord our God belong mercies and forgivenesses, though we have rebelled against him.

1 John i. 9. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

Col. ii. 13, 14, 15. Having forgiven you all trespasses; blotting out the hand writing of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross; and, having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a shew of them openly triumphing over them in it.

Matt. ix. 6. The Son of Man hath power on earth to forgive sins.

1 John ii. 12. I write unto you, little children, because your sins are forgiven you, for his name's sake.

Micah vii. 18, 19. Who is a God like unto thee, that pardoneth iniquity, and passeth by the transgression of the remnant of his heritage? he retained not his anger for ever, because he delighteth in mercy. He will turn again, he will have compassion upon us, he will subdue our iniquities: and thou wilt cast all their sins into the depths of the sea.

10.—JUSTIFICATION.

Rom. iii. 24. Being justified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.

Rom. iii. 28. We conclude that a man is justified by faith, without the deeds of the law.

Gal. ii. 16. Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ.

Gal. v. 6. Faith which worketh by love.

Acts xiii. 39. By him, all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses.

Isaiah liii. 11. By his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many, for he shall bear their iniquities.

Rom. iv. 2. If Abraham were justified by works, he hath whereof to glory.

Rom. iv. 5. But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness.

James ii. 21, 22. When he had offered Isaac his son upon the altar, seest thou how faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect?

Rom. iv. 24, 25. Jesus our Lord—was delivered for our offences, and raised again for our justification.

11.—SANCTIFICATION.

Ezek. xxxvi. 25—27. Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean; from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you. A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you; and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them.

1 Peter i. 2. Elect, according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience, and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ.

John xvii. 19. For their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth.

Rom. vii. 4. Ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ, that we should bring forth fruit unto God.

Heb. xiii. 20, 21. The God of peace that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is well pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom be glory for ever and ever, Amen.

1 Thess. v. 23. The very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit, and soul, and body, be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Eph. v. 25—27. Christ also loved the Church, and gave himself for it;

That he might sanctify and cleanse it, with the washing of water by the word.

That he might present it to himself a glorious Church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish.

Heb. xii. 14. Holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord.

Col. i. 12. Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light.

12.—DEVOTEDNESS TO GOD.

1 Cor. vi. 20. Ye are bought with a price, therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's.

2 Cor. v. 15. He died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them.

Rom. xii. 1. I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.

Deut. xvi. 16, 17. They shall not appear before the Lord empty. Every man shall give as he is able, according to the blessing of the Lord thy God which he hath given thee.

Titus ii. 14. Who gave himself for us that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify from himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.

1 Peter i. 17—19. Pass the time of your sojourning here in fear; forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation, received by tradition from your fathers; but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot.

1 John i. 7. If we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another; and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.

13.—LOVE TO THE BRETHREN.

1 John iv. 11. Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another.

John xiii. 34. A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another.

1 John iii. 14. We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren.

Heb. x. 24. Let us consider one another, to provoke unto love and to good works.

Rom. xii. 10. Be kindly affectioned one to another, with brotherly love, in honour preferring one another.

1 Thess. iv. 9. Ye yourselves are taught of God to love one another.

1 Thess. iii. 12. The Lord make you to increase and abound in love one toward another, and towards all men.

14.—COMMUNION WITH CHRIST.

Cant. ii. 3, 4. I sat down under his shadow with great delight, and his fruit was sweet to my taste.

He brought me to the banqueting house, and his banner over me was love.

Cant. ii. 16. My beloved is mine, and I am his.

Luke xxiv. 30—32. It came to pass, as he sat at meat with them, he took bread and blessed it, and brake, and gave to them.

And their eyes were opened, and they knew him; and he vanished out of their sight.

And they said one to another, Did not our heart burn within us, while he talked with us by the way, and while he opened to us the Scriptures?

John xiv. 21. He that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself unto him.

Phil. i. 21. For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.

Col. ii. 6. As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him.

1 Cor. i. 9. God is faithful by whom ye were called unto the fellowship of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord.

1 John i. 3. Truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ.

15.—THE COMMUNION OF SAINTS.

Ephes. iv. 4—6. There is one body and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling;

One Lord, one faith, one baptism;

One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.

Phil. ii. 1, 2. If there be therefore any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any bowels and mercies.

Fulfil ye my joy, that ye be like-minded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind.

1 John i. 2, 3. The life was manifested, and we have seen it, and bear witness and show unto you that eternal life which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us;

That which we have seen and heard, declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us.

Eph. ii. 19, 20. Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens with the saints and of the household of God;

And are built upon the foundation of the Apostles and Prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner-stone.

1 Cor. xii. 25—27. The members should have the same care one for another.

And whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or one member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it.

Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular.

16.—MORTIFICATION OF SIN.

Gal. v. 24. They that are Christ's have crucified the flesh, with the affections and lusts.

Rom. vi. 5, 6, If we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection, knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin.

Gal. ii. 20. I am crucified with Christ; nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me.

Rom. vi. 10, 11. In that he died, he died unto sin once; but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God.

Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Rom. viii. 13. If ye, through the Spirit, do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live.

Col. iii. 3—5. For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God.

When Christ who is our life shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory.

Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth.

17.—STRENGTH ACCORDING TO OUR NECESSITY.

Deut. xxxiii. 25. As thy days, so shall thy strength be.

Phil. iv. 13. I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.

Isaiah xliii. 1, 2. Fear not, for I have redeemed thee, and formed thee; I have called thee by thy name; thou art mine.

When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee.

2 Tim. i. 12. I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day.

Heb. iv. 16. Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.

18.—VICTORY OVER TEMPTATION.

1 John v. 4, 5. This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith. Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?

1 Cor. x. 13. God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above what you are able to bear, but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it.

James i. 12. Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him.

Heb. ii. 18. In that he himself hath suffered, being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted.

Rom. xvi. 20. The God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly.

1 Cor. xv. 57. Thanks be to God which giveth us the victory, through our Lord Jesus Christ.

Matt. xii. 20, 21. A bruised reed shall he not break, and smoking flax shall he not quench, till he send forth judgment unto victory.

And in his name shall the Gentiles trust.

19.—ETERNAL LIFE.

Rom. vi. 23. The gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

John vi. 51. I am the living bread which came down from heaven; if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever.

John xvii. 3. This is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent.

John xvii. 24. Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory which thou hast given me.

1 Thess. v. 10. Christ died for us, that whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with him.

Rev. vii. 15—17. They are before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple; and he that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them, they shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more, neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat. For the LAMB which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters, and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes.

Rev. xxii. 3, 5. There shall be no more curse; but the throne of God and of the LAMB shall be in it, and his servants shall serve him. And they shall see his face, and his name shall be in their foreheads. And there shall be no night there; and they need no candle, neither light of the sun; for the Lord God giveth them light, and they shall reign for ever and ever.

CHAPTER IX.

MEDITATIONS AND PRAYERS AFTER RECEIVING.

SOME hints are given, (see chap. x. part ii.) to assist the reader in a practical improvement of this ordinance; the following meditations and prayers are added, to help him in his retired devotion.

WHEN THE ORDINANCE HAS BEEN REFRESHING.

1 Thess. v. 18. *In every thing give thanks.*

Thanks, more than I can express, be unto God, my Father, for his inestimable mercy in Christ Jesus. O my soul, thou hast abundant cause to bless the Lord! See thyself once an apostate rebel, without God, without Christ, and having no hope. But now see thy God, not only allowing, but inviting, and himself inclining thee to return. See him not only pardoning, but accepting and justifying thee. He treats thee, too, not as a servant, but as a child. He feeds thee at the table, when thou dost not deserve with the dogs to pick up the crumbs that fall from it. Nay, see the Father of mercies running, as it were, to embrace thee, and to give tokens of reconci-

liation and love; and filling thee with holy desires and heavenly affections.

And as if all this were a small matter, he has told thee of things yet to come, even for ever and ever. In these things he has given thee a pledge of eternal favour and love.

And may I then hope that I am "a member of Christ, a child of God, and an inheritor of the kingdom of heaven?" O thanks be unto God for his unspeakable gift? Only add, O Lord, this additional benefit, more grace to love thee, and to serve thee, till I come to see thee as thou art, and know as I am known.

Yet I have also to consider myself still as on the dangerous ocean, with a stormy tempest hovering around me; and I pray that I may ever fix my hope, as well as my heart, on HIM who alone is mighty to save. I must view myself as still in the midst of the barren wilderness, having gained, however, for a moment, a glipse of my native home; and I ardently beseech my Guide and my Defender, that in the strength of this I may be enabled to go on my way rejoicing.

What then shall I render unto the Lord who has heard my prayers? *I will pay my vows in the presence of all his people.* O God of my salvation, I have given myself to thee. Help me now, I beseech thee, to devote, day by day, all my possessions, and influence, and time, and abilities, to the service of Him who has bought me with a price, and blessed me with a hope full of immortality. And seeing that Jesus is the spring of all my joys, may I ever count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord.

Canticles ii. 3. *I sat down under his shadow with great delight, and his fruit was sweet to my taste.*

How good and gracious is God, who has heard my prayers, and given me communion with him, and comfort at his table. My thoughts were less wandering in the previous prayers, and more intent at the time of receiving. He enabled me to think on him who was wounded for us, with much love and joy; and my heart, filled with love to others, longed for their salvation and their spiritual welfare. How refreshing is it, when receiving the bread, to be encouraged to feed on Christ by faith with thanksgiving; and to have an humble hope that I have received the inestimable benefits procured by his death, the pardon of all my sins, an interest in the promises of God, an assurance of his love, and a strengthened hope of immortal happiness! What cause is there here for liveliest praise! O my soul, and all that is within me, bless the Lord! Thou, even thou, mayest yet hope to reach the celestial heights, and to join the song of the blessed above, in ascribing to thy God and Saviour, honour and glory, for ever and ever. Bless the Lord, O my soul.

And now that I am retired from the heavenly banquet, I would earnestly pray to thee to grant that what has passed, may strengthen and refresh me to fight the arduous battle, and to resist the many and mighty enemies, within and without, that would destroy my soul. Let me think of the glorious crown for which I am contending, and remember that it is worth every sacrifice. Let the joy of the Lord be my strength.

Psalm lxiii. 3. *Because thy loving-kindness is better than life itself, my lips shall praise thee.*

How blessed an institution is this, O my adorable Saviour! What could have been found out comparable to it to quicken us to holiness! How does it entertain our minds, and fill our souls? Like the disciples going to Emmaus, our hearts burn within us, and are full of amazing wonder at thy rich mercy. Before I come to thy holy table trifles divert my mind and engage my thoughts; but when I come from thence, my heart is all joy and wonder, all adoration and praise; all sacrifice and resignation; courage and resolution. How is my Saviour to be adored for this wise and gracious institution, and who has provided so effectually for his faithful servants to the world's end! Be thou ever adored, O merciful Jesus, my God, and my Lord, for thy wonderful designs of love and mercy to the sons of men! Amen.*

John xiv. 27. *My peace I give unto you.*

I have reason to be very grateful for the goodness of my heavenly Father in the past sacrament. Though I did not feel any peculiar joy, yet I felt a calm spirit of recollection, which was very refreshing. Before I went to the table, several passages of scripture engaged my attention, raised my heart to God, and expanded it so in love to my fellow-creatures, that I could not but plead earnestly for them as well

* Bonnell.

as for myself. Though less composed in the act of receiving, yet when I thought on those words, "His body given for thee," "His blood shed for thee," my heart was melted within me to some degree of tenderness and love. In his love and in his pity he has redeemed me. Surely nothing but pity and love could induce the Lord to seek and to save my soul.

This calm and devout spirit has been in a good measure maintained since the ordinance. O how different from formal services, and how refreshing, are those prayers in which our hearts are really lifted up to God, in the full conviction that he sees and hears us. Lord, let the view of the cross of Christ, ever fill my soul with this happy peace, with holy love, and with heavenly joy.

Phil. iv. 4. *Rejoice in the Lord.*

I would indeed contemplate and admire thy wonderful grace, the multitude of thy tender mercies, and thy abounding goodness, till my heart is filled with joy in thee. How greatly have I partaken of these mercies! That such a miserable sinner as I have been, and still am, should be admitted to the glorious hope of the gospel; that my sins may be pardoned and remembered no more: that I should be welcomed at the table of the Lord, and the dear society of his servants, and there again feel and enjoy the blessedness of Christian hope, and peace, and joy: these things call for unfeigned gratitude. O my soul, is it then possible! mayest thou reasonably expect yet to have and see the happier days, yet to enjoy the brighter and serener sky than ever was manifested here below, in those blessed regions

where sins shall not harass, nor temptations afflict; where the wicked cease from troubling, and the weary are at rest? And wilt thou not love him who has procured this hope for thee? Surely none in the heavenly mansions will have to sing a louder or more grateful song of praise!

O that I might never again sin against my heavenly Father; never offend my compassionate Saviour; never grieve my best Comforter, the Holy Spirit; never dishonour my holy vocation, nor walk unworthy of that name wherewith I am called.

WHEN OUR MINDS HAVE BEEN WANDERING.

Job xxiii. 3. *O that I knew where I might find him!*

My heart was cold and distracted, unaffected, and absent, during the communion this day. Worldly thoughts crept in; and I seemed to gain no blessing, no lively views of Christ and his love, of sin and its guilt, and of holiness and its excellence. Lord, I humble myself before thee. Pardon whatever it was that was wrong in me, that occasioned the loss of thy manifested presence and favour. I deserve nothing from thee of good, and my many sins may well be visited not only with these, but with much heavier marks of thy displeasure. But, O Lord, remember thy mercies of old. Forsake me not utterly. Restore unto me the comfort of thy presence, and the joy of thy salvation.

Yet let me never be discouraged, by apparent rebukes, from seeking the blessing of God in all the appointed means of grace. *They that seek shall find,* is his promise and my hope. And I believe, and am

sure that he deals with me both as a wise and tender Father, in what he withholds, as well as in what he gives. *Teach me thy way, O Lord, I will walk in thy truth; unite my heart to fear thy name.*

Micah vii. 18, 19. *Who is a God like unto thee, that pardoneth iniquity, and passeth by the transgression of the remnant of his heritage.—He will subdue our iniquities, and thou wilt cast all their sins into the depths of the sea.*

Though I have had but little sense of the divine presence at the Lord's table, and came from it humbled and depressed; yet passages of scripture like this are very supporting and consoling to my anxious heart. They are just what I want every day. What I daily see of my own sinfulness and guilt, and my continual tendencies to evil, do give me an abasing and depressing view of my corruption. Did I not know what the Bible says of the general wickedness of fallen man, I should be ready to say it was impossible that there could be an individual, favoured as I have been, so guilty as I am. Pride, covetousness, and sensuality, (the threefold enemy of the Christian,) have by turns tempted, assailed, and wounded me. Where can I fly, O Jesus! where, but to thee? In thy wounds I hide me. At thy cross I shelter me. *There* iniquity is pardoned; *there* the transgression of the remnant of thy heritage is passed by.

But now, O God, my Saviour, I entreat thee, *subdue* my iniquities. Only thine Almighty arm can vanquish them. I look to thee for victory. Fight for me,

fight *in* me; that I may be more than conqueror, through him that loved me.

THE LOVE OF GOD IN CHRIST.

1 John iii. 1. *Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us.*

What a display of divine love has this ordinance brought before me! God not sparing his own Son—Jesus dying, and when about to die, thinking of us, and leaving this institution for the perpetual comforting of his people! Indeed, nothing that ever struck man with surprise and wonder is so amazing, however it may be unnoticed or slighted, as the divine love. That Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, and the Creator of all worlds, once died for sinners, is, to the soul enlightened to see the truth of things, and conscious of its own state, the most stupendous, cheering, and enlivening truth that ever gladdened man's heart. I seem to get new views of it when I weep in prayer over my sinful and vile heart, and then turn to the hope set before me in his death, as exhibited at his table. Free justification by the grace of God, through his redemption, and sanctification by his Spirit, are doctrines which I every day need for refuge, consolation and support. Free love, love bestowed, given to *us*, us as sinners, and that every day—here is my hope. For however I may by the grace of God be kept from what man calls sin, yet the continual proneness of my heart to wander, the way in which I tread on the borders of what is unlawful, and the workings of sinful affections within, compel me to declare, my *heart is deceitful*

above all things, and desperately wicked. O Saviour of sinners, cleanse and purify me. Give me the new heart. Let thy life-giving food revive me, and the fountain of living waters, opened through thy merit, refresh me.

Psalm ciii. 1. *Bless the Lord, O my soul; and all that is within me, bless his holy name.*

Who can utter the mighty acts of the Lord? who can shew forth all his praise? From all eternity thou didst mercifully foresee man's misery, and contrived a remedy for it: thou providedst a surety for him before the debt was contracted, and a Saviour before he was lost. Thy righteous wrath soon broke out against the angels that fell, and presently condemned them to everlasting chains of darkness; but long hast thou waited on, yea, followed me with mercy, and that even after I had many times undervalued and trampled upon the greatest gift and richest jewel of heaven—Jesus Christ.

Heavenly Father, though I, like the prodigal, have left my Father's house, yet on my return, graciously own me again for thy child. I am poor and destitute, and helpless; but in thee the fatherless findeth mercy. Lord, help me, and save me: give me childlike dispositions towards thee: make me meek and humble, obedient and tractable, affectionate, and full of regard to thee, my heavenly Father.

Lord, let thy Spirit help me to remember my solemn engagements. I have been giving thee fresh promises for thankfulness, love, and obedience: seeing I have no strength in myself, give me thy powerful grace, O Christ Jesus, thou rock of my sal-

vation, that I may pay my vows, and that my obedience may be universal, cheerful, constant, and growing like the morning light. May I now be going on from strength to strength, from one degree of grace to another; from one evidence, experience, and manifestation to another; till at length I appear before God in Sion.*

Luke xii. 32. *Fear not, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom.*

Jesus commands his disciples not to fear, knowing how ready they are to be filled with anxious cares and distressing apprehensions. He calls them his *flock*, his property, his charge; for he guards and he feeds them. He tells them God is their *father;* and will so great a Father see his children perish? He informs them there is a *kingdom* for them, holy, glorious, and eternal: and he suggests that it is bestowed with *good pleasure*, gratuitously, and with full satisfaction and complacency. O the unspeakable love of God, my heavenly Father, towards the sinful and rebellious!

I charge thee, O my soul, to live as the heir of such an inheritance, as the grateful child of such a Father. Let a respect to the recompense of reward, raise thee above the allurements of sin, above the mere concerns of flesh and sense, and above all thy anxieties, suspicions, and fears. Never immoderately grieve, or even be uneasy, if thou meetest with losses and disappointments, conflicts and sorrows. Is the kingdom provided for thee so mean and inconsiderable, that

* Altered from Willison.

thou shouldest be cast down, and almost ready to quarrel with Providence because thou hast not such full blessings here as thou wouldest wish! Shall an heir of immortal glory distress himself with fear of this or the other evil, which may never happen, or may not be so grievous as he apprehended? Can any thing happen without thy Father? Is he not wise in all he sends? Mayest thou not expect such supports from thy Father, as shall make thy afflictions comforts rather than crosses; and such improvement in religion by them, as shall make thee thankful for them all thy days? Ought I not, sinful as I am, to be resigned, without a large share of earthly or even spiritual comforts, yea to be joyful in tribulation, with such glory in reversion? Cast all thy care, then, on him, for he careth for thee.*

John xiii. 12. *Know ye what I have done to you?*

"Was it love in Christ that he washed his disciples' feet? O, what love to wash us from our sins, to wash our filthy polluted souls! The former was with the cheap element of water; the latter was with blood—yes, his own precious blood. And having washed us, he puts that question, *Know ye what I have done to you, or for you?* Sit down, and consider: pause upon it. O what, indeed! who knows, who can say, what he has done for us? To commend the love of Christ, look on him in his shining robes, with beams of glory; (Matt. xvii. 2.) when *his face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as the light.* And then look on him in the garden, and on the

* Altered from Orton.

cross. Compare these together. It is the same glorious Jesus! in the one you see sublime glory and majesty: in the other, deep abasement and humiliation. O might we by faith see him in the depth of his humiliation and height of his exaltation, as white and ruddy, what a glorious sight were this! The vision of him is the happiness of the innumerable company of angels and spirits, and just men made perfect; and to see and enjoy him is the true comfort of all communion in the church here below. Let us follow him from the mount of Transfiguration, to the mount of Calvary. He took the same disciples, Peter, James, and John, to be witnesses both of his glory on the mount, and of his agonies in the garden, (Matt. xvii. 1; xxvi. 37.) to teach us closely to compare who he was, and *what* he suffered." *

1 Pet. i. 8. *Whom having not seen, ye love.*

True it is I have not with the outward sight beheld my Saviour; but I have had communion with him; I have been blessed by him; and thus, with full conviction, *I know that my Redeemer liveth.* And when I see what he has done, and is doing, and will do for me, I cannot but love him. Surely, even this day's experience may convince me, that if ever I had the feeling of love, I feel love to Jesus Christ; to him who died for me, who has recovered me from hell, who has restored to me peace and happiness here, and gained for me heaven hereafter. The grief and burden is this—I love him so feebly, and am so little conformed to him. O Saviour! how little of thy

* Beart's Meditations, p. 119, 120.

self-denial, of thy patience, of thy humility and deadness to the world! how little of thy faith, and prayer, and zeal, and love, have I! Give me, O give me thy Spirit. May that exhibition of thy dying love which this ordinance has just presented to me, touch, and warm, and melt my soul, and fill me with stronger and more ardent attachment to thee than ever I have before felt or enjoyed.

1 John iv. 19. *We love him, because he first loved us.*

He who loves, is always full of joy: he runs, he flies, he is free, and nothing can restrain him when duty calls. He gives all, he possesses all; because he relies on that only Sovereign Good, from whom all blessings proceed. Love thinks nothing a trouble, is never fatigued by labour; it undertakes what is beyond its natural strength; it never pleads inability, because nothing is impossible to it; it does not grow weary in great undertakings; it is not discouraged by afflictions, nor cast down by fear; it always mounts upward like a brisk flame, and its ardour is redoubled by every thing that is opposed to quench it.

O my God! inflame me with love, and so direct my heart, that I may love thee perfectly. Make me feel how sweet it is to love thee, and to be lost in thy love. Let my soul raise itself to thee, follow and possess thee as the Well-beloved, and be transported with affection and joy. O God! may I love thee more than myself; may I love for thy sake only, and may I love in thee all those whom I love, and may I never suffer myself to love the creature but for thy sake.*

* Basnage.

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* Basnage.

John xxi. 15. *Yea, Lord, thou knowest that I love thee.*

Whatever leads thee, O my soul! to think on Jesus and his love, ought to be dear unto thee. Let the cross of Christ be thy principal knowledge, thy greatest glory, and thy continual employment. Thou shouldest determine to know nothing, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified.

My Saviour has neither set bound to my desires, nor to his sweet communications. I will seek thee, therefore, O my Saviour! for thou art he whom my soul loveth. I will set thee as a seal upon my heart; oh! do thou continually make deeper impressions on it. Take courage, my soul, and love Jesus as far as is possible with a love proportioned to his own.

We did not love him; but he first loved us. His love was unwearied; his loving cares, his tender exhortations, his gracious and kind miracles, were far from being sufficient; it was necessary for him to shed his blood, nay, all of it; and should not this precious blood produce the most tender emotions within us? Should not the love of Christ soften our hearts, and give rise to a reciprocal tenderness? His banner over me, saith the Spouse, *was love* (or, as it is expressed in a French translation, *the dress I wear is love.*) It is her wedding garment, without which she cannot be admitted to the wedding feast. Matt. xxii. 11.

O my Redeemer, who hast loved me so much, kindle in me more and more the divine fire of thy love. Then will neither sufferings, death, nor even

martyrdom be too much for me; then shall I be able to say to thee, "*Yea, Lord! thou knowest that I love thee.*" *

THE SPIRIT OF ADOPTION.

2 Cor. vi. 18. *And I will be a father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty.*

I have often kept out of my Father's presence. I have often forgotten that gracious relation in which I stand to him in Christ Jesus, the first-born of many brethren. I have indeed been an undutiful, perverse, rebellious child; yet still a child. The longing after my Father's favour, the spirit of love and satisfaction, raising me, in happy moments, to joy in God as my God; the spirit of submission, helping me to say in trials, sorrows, and difficulties, *It is the Lord;* and the desire after his presence, in the means of grace, and specially at his table, these things give me some encouragement to hope, that I am now a son of God. 1 John iii. 2. As such I have just been feeding with his family. O that I may now walk worthy of my high and holy relationship, and be an imitator of God as one of his dear children; Eph. v. 1. O that I may ever have filial confidence in, and filial affection and filial reverence towards the great Jehovah; that while I am exalted in privilege, I may have some corresponding attainments in piety, humility, and holiness.

"By these holy mysteries, God assures me as it

* Superville.

were of his faithfulness, and gives me the children's bread. He here treats us as the sons and daughters of the Lord Almighty. He bestows on us not only the right, but the spirit and hope of children."

HOLY RESOLUTIONS.

Matt. xxiii. 23. *The weightier matters of the law—judgment, mercy, and faith.*

Gracious Saviour, let me never neglect these things. In thy strength I purpose to be strictly JUST, upright, and conscientious in all my dealings; never to use for my own purpose that which does not belong to me; never to deceive in buying or selling; and never to speak in the absence of another anything against him contrary to the rules of justice and charity; nor in their presence, add to the natural pride and vanity of the human heart, by flattery.

I purpose to let mercy govern all my conduct. Not to be harsh in my dealings with others, not to be scanty in my charities; but to do good according to my power, and to shew mercy with cheerfulness.

I purpose, by the same strength, to be FAITHFUL to all my engagements, and to trust in thee with all my heart. *Lord, I believe: help my unbelief.* Let me have a noble and generous confidence in thy word, thy care and thy love; and give thee glory by a simple and entire dependance on thee.

Thus preserve me from a mere scrupulosity about smaller things, which would only foster self-righteousness; and enable me never to neglect the weightier matters of thy holy law.

RESIGNATION.

Psalm cxxxi. 2. *My soul is even as a weaned child.*

This is the design of my Heavenly Father in all the afflictions, losses, and disappointments of this vain world;—that I may see its emptiness and insufficiency, and be gradually separated from it, and dead to it. But O what a wayward, prodigal son, the Heavenly Father has in me! I seem only to live near to him and walk closely in his ways, while he chastises and humbles me.

Well then, as to all repining thoughts, I must be dumb before him, and look up to Jesus, my great Head, in whom alone I can be accepted. He is altogether lovely. He has all-sufficient grace. I would abide in him, that by him I may bear fruit. May all crosses, and sorrows, and difficulties, draw me to Christ; and then all will be gainful and profitable.

And O how soon the present scene is over! How little in that awful and interminable futurity, and that invisible but real world on the verge of which I stand—how little there, can the honour and reputation, the ease and profit, or the distinguished stations of this world, avail me. The rich and the glorious man enters that world without his riches or glory: *When he dieth he shall carry nothing away; his glory shall not descend after him.* All the objects of human ambition, apart from Christ and his kingdom, attained in their highest degree, will only aggravate the tremendous shame, and everlasting contempt that shall then overwhelm the guilty soul. Nor need we

that gracious Saviour, where all is compassion, and love, and tenderness: where is a full atonement for enemies and rebels, a rich provision of mercy for the sinful, a complete salvation for the lost. O Jesus, pity, save, and bless my soul. Strengthen me for every duty that lies before me. In nothing can I claim blessing, but in thy free promises and thy full redemption. May I then delight in thee, and walk closely with thee every day. Draw me, and I will run after thee.

PRAYER AFTER RECEIVING THE LORD'S SUPPER.

Thanks be unto thee, Holy Father, Lord God Almighty, thanks be unto thee for the privilege which thou hast given me of uniting with thy people, to commemorate the sacrifice of the death of the Lord Jesus Christ, and for all the edification and comfort thus given to me.

O that this ordinance of thine own appointment may so deeply and so permanently affect my heart, as constantly to influence my future life. Let the love of Christ now at length constrain me no longer to live to myself, but to him who died for me.

Pardon all in this service that was not right before thee. All I do is defiled with sin; but I offer every service unto thee in the name of Jesus alone. I bless thee through him, for whatever thy Spirit enabled me to do in any measure agreeably to thy holy will. But my whole trust and hope is in the sacrifice of Christ Jesus, which I have been now commemorating, to atone not only for former transgressions, but for all the defects of my preparation, and for all my failings even at this solemn feast. Lord, spare

me, and accept me on account of that great propitiation for the sins of the whole world.

O that I may ever remember that the vows of the Lord are upon me, and that I am thine, irrevocably thine; and may I walk from day to day as becomes a child of God, and an heir of his glory. Keep alive in my mind a constant sense of my weakness, and my entire dependance on thy grace. May I now go forth to my duties more humbled and more devoted, more watchful against my spiritual enemies, and more determined to give all for him who gave up his life for me.

Give unto me, I pray thee, this comfortable evidence of having had communion with Christ; that my faith in him for all needful supplies in my way to heaven is manifestly strengthened; that I have the same mind that was in him; have become like him; am copying his example, and treading in his steps. May I watch over my motives as well as my conduct; and do thou deliver me from improper motives in doing outwardly good works. May I also find in my growing experience more proofs of my being a member of the mystical body of Christ, in that my love to those that belong to him increases, and I can make larger allowances for their infirmities, and more readily do them self-denying services. Nor let my love stop short of the divine pattern of Him who loved and prayed for his worst enemies.

O Lord, I would now, in the fulness of my heart, earnestly pray for the hallowing of thy name, the coming of thy kingdom, and the doing of thy will on earth as it is in heaven. And O grant that, till the Lord come, his table may be crowded with believing and joyful guests. O when shall all the ends of the

earth look to Jesus and be saved! Hasten it in thy good pleasure, O Lord; that Christ Jesus may be known, loved, and obeyed, in every land, and the Lord's name be praised from the rising of the sun to the going down of the same. Thus glorify thy great name, fulfil thy gracious promises, and let thy kingdom be fully established, through Jesus Christ, our only Redeemer. Amen.

CHAPTER X.

PSALMS AND HYMNS SUITED TO THE LORD'S SUPPER.

OUR Lord and his disciples closed the first celebration of this institution by singing a hymn. We read, *When they had sung an hymn, they went out into the Mount of Olives.* It is probable that they sung some, if not all, of the Psalms, from the 113th to the 118th, which the Jews were accustomed to sing after the Passover.

As in attending to this holy and delightful exercise, we are only copying the primitive example; and as some select and suitable Psalms and Hymns may assist our devotion, they are here added for that purpose. They are chiefly on subjects directly connected with the different chapters of this Treatise.

I.—PREPARATORY.

1. L. M.

My Saviour! is thy table spread?
And does thy cup with love o'erflow?
Thither be all thy children led,
And let them all thy goodness know.

Hail, sacred feast, which Jesus makes!
Rich banquet of his flesh and blood;
Thrice happy he, who here partakes
That sacred stream, that heavenly food!

Why are his dainties all in vain
Before unwilling hearts displayed?
Was not the Lamb for sinners slain?
Are you denied the children's bread?

O let thy table honour'd be,
And furnish'd well with joyful guests?
And may each soul salvation see,
That here its sacred pledges tastes!

Revive thy dying churches, Lord,
And bid our drooping graces live;
And all that energy afford,
A Saviour's blood alone can give.

Doddridge.

2. S. M.

Jesus invites his saints,
To meet around his board
Here pardoned sinners sit and hold
Communion with their God.

Here we survey that love
Which spoke in every breath;
Which crowned each action of his life,
And triumphed in his death.

Here let our powers unite,
His glorious name to raise;
Pleasure and joy fill every mind,
And every voice be praise.

And while we share the gifts
His gracious hands bestow,
Our hearts by Jesu's love inspired,
With kind affections glow.

Watts.

PSALM 116. C. M.

For mercies, countless as the sands,
Which daily I receive,
From Jesus my Redeemer's hands,
My soul, what canst thou give?

Alas! from such a heart as mine,
What can I bring him forth?
My best is stained and dyed with sin,
My all is nothing worth!

Yet this acknowledgment I'll make,
For all he has bestowed—
Salvation's sacred cup I'll take,
And call upon my God.

The best returns for one like me,
So wretched and so poor,
Is from his gifts to draw a plea,
And ask him still for more.

Newton.

PSALM 139. C. M.

God is a Spirit, just and wise,
He sees our inmost mind:
In vain to heaven we raise our cries,
And leave our souls behind.

Lord! search my thoughts, and try my ways,
And make my soul sincere;
Then shall I stand before thy face,
And find acceptance there.

Watts.

PSALM 51. L. M.

Bowed down beneath th' oppressive load
Of deep transgression, O my God,
With grief and conscious shame I flee,
Guilty and self-condemned, to thee.

My sins and sorrows at thy feet
I spread, before thy mercy-seat;
Mercy my suit, mercy my cry;
Thy mercy spares, or else I die.

My sin is great: its ceaseless smart
Pervades and pierces through my heart;
Wash me, O God, without, within;
O cleanse and free me from my sin.

3. L. M.

O Jesus! full of truth and grace,
More full of grace than I of sin;
Yet once again I seek thy face,
Open thine arms and take me in.

Thou knowest the way to bring me back,
My fallen spirit to restore;
O, for thy truth and mercy's sake,
Forgive, and bid me sin no more.

The stone to flesh, O Lord, convert;
The veil of sin once more remove:
Sprinkle thy blood upon my heart,
And melt it by thy dying love.

Give to mine eyes refreshing tears,
And kindle my relentings now;
Fill my whole soul with filial fears,
And to thy yoke my spirit bow.

4. C. M.

How condescending and how kind,
 Was God's eternal Son!
Our misery reached his heavenly mind,
 And pity brought him down.

This was compassion like a God;
That when the Saviour knew
The price of pardon was his blood,
His pity ne'er withdrew.

Now, though he reigns exalted high,
His love is still as great;
Well he remembers Calvary;
Nor let his saints forget.

Here let our hearts begin to melt,
While we his death record;
And with our joy for pardoned guilt,
Mourn that we pierced the Lord.

Watts.

5. C. M.

The King of Heaven his table spreads,
And dainties crown the board;
Not Paradise with all its joys,
Could such delight afford.

Pardon and peace to dying men,
And endless life are given,
And the rich blood that Jesus shed,
To raise the soul to heaven.

Millions of souls, in glory now,
Were fed and feasted here;
And millions more, still on the way,
Around the board appear.

Yet are his house and heart so large,
That millions more may come;
Nor could the wide o'erspreading world
O'erfill the spacious room.

All things are ready; come away,
Nor weak excuses frame;
Crowd to your places at the feast,
And bless the founder's name.

6. L. M.

Here let us see thy face, O Lord,
And view salvation with our eyes;
And taste and feel the living word,
And bread descending from the skies.

Thou hast prepar'd this dying Lamb,
Hast set his blood before our face,
To teach the terrors of thy name,
And shew the wonders of thy grace.

Jesus! our light! our morning-star!
Shine Thou on nations yet unknown;
The glory of thy people here,
And joy of spirits near thy throne.

7. C. M.

And did the Holy and the Just,
The Sovereign of the skies,
Stoop down to wretchedness and dust,
That guilty worms might rise?

Yes; the Redeemer left his throne,
His radiant throne on high;
Surprising mercy! love unknown!
To suffer, bleed, and die.

He took the dying traitor's place,
And suffered in his stead;
For man, (O miracle of grace!)
For man the Saviour bled!

Dear Lord, what heav'nly wonders dwell
In thy atoning blood!
By this are sinners snatch'd from hell,
And rebels brought to God.

Jesus, my soul adoring bends
To love so full, so free;
And may I hope that love extends
Its sacred power to me.

What glad returns can I impart
For favours so divine?
O take my all—this worthless heart,
And make it wholly thine.

Steele.

8. P. M.

Go to dark Gethsemane,
Ye that feel the tempter's power;
Your Redeemer's conflict see:
Watch with him one bitter hour:
Turn not from his griefs away;
Learn from him to watch and pray.

See him at the judgment hall,
Beaten, bound, revil'd, arraign'd;
See him meekly bearing all;
Love to man his soul sustain'd.
Shun not suffering, shame, or loss;
Learn of Christ to bear the cross.

Calvary's mournful mountain view;
There the Lord of glory see,
Made a sacrifice for you.
Dying on th' accursed tree:
"It is finish'd?" hear him cry;
Trust in Christ, and learn to die.

Early to the tomb repair,
Where they laid his breathless clay;
Angels kept their vigils there:
Who hath taken him away?
"Christ is ris'n!" he seeks the skies;
Saviour! teach us so to rise.

9. 8,7,4.

Hark! the voice of love and mercy
Sounds aloud from Calvary;
See the rocks are rent asunder;
Darkness veils the mid-day sky;
"It is Finish'd!"
Hear the dying Saviour cry.

O what joy to helpless sinners,
These triumphant words afford!
Heavenly blessings, without measure,
Flow to us through Christ the Lord.
"It is finish'd!"
Saints his dying words record.

Tune your harps anew, ye seraphs!
Strike them to Emmanuel's name;
All on earth, and all in heaven,
Join the triumph to proclaim—
"It is finish'd!"
Glory to the bleeding Lamb.

10. 7's.

Jesus! refuge of my soul!
Let me to thy bosom fly,
While the raging billows roll,
While the tempest still is high!
Hide me, O my Saviour! hide,
Till the storm of life is past;
Safe into the haven guide;
O receive my soul at last!

Thou, O Christ! art all I want;
And my all in Thee I find;
Raise the fallen, cheer the faint,
Heal the sick, and lead the blind.
Just and holy is thy name,
I am all unrighteousness;
Vile and full of sin I am—
Thou art full of truth and grace.

All my trust on thee is stay'd,
All my help from Thee I bring;
Cover my defenceless head
With the shadow of thy wing.
Plenteous grace with thee is found,
Grace to pardon all my sin:
Let the healing streams abound,
Make and keep me pure within.

C. Wesley.

II.—AT THE SACRAMENT.

11. C. M.

And are we now brought near to God,
Who once at distance stood?
And, to effect this blessed change,
Did Jesus shed his blood?

Oh for a song of ardent praise,
To bear our souls above!
What should allay our lively hope,
Or damp our flaming love!

Then let us join the heavenly choirs,
To praise our glorious king!
Oh may that love which spread this feast,
Inspire us while we sing!

12. L. M.

At thy command, O gracious Lord,
Here we attend thy dying feast;
Thy blood, like wine, adorns thy board,
And thine own flesh feeds every guest.

Our faith adores thy bleeding love,
And trusts for life in one that died:
We hope for heavenly crowns above,
From a Redeemer crucified.

Let the vain world pronounce it shame,
And fling their scandals on thy cause;
We come to boast our Saviour's name,
And make our triumph in his cross.

With joy we tell the scoffing age,
"He that was dead, has left his tomb!
He lives above your utmost rage,
And we are waiting till he come."

13. C. M.

LORD, at thy table I behold
The wonders of thy grace,
But most of all admire that I
Should find a welcome place.

What strange surprising grace is this,
That one so lost has room!
Jesus my weary soul invites,
And freely bids me come.

Ye saints below and hosts of heaven,
Join all your praising powers;
No theme is like redeeming love;
No Saviour is like our's.

Stennet.

14. C. M.

This do, in remembrance of me. Luke xxii. 19.

ACCORDING to thy gracious word,
In meek humility,
This will I do, my dying Lord;
I *will* remember thee.

Thy body, broken for my sake,
My bread from heaven shall be;
Thy testamental cup I take,
And thus remember thee.

Can I Gethsemane forget?
Or there thy conflict see,
Thine agony, and bloody sweat,
And not remember thee?

When to thy cross I turn my eyes,
And rest on Calvary,
O Lamb of God, my sacrifice!
I must remember thee.

Remember thee, and all thy pains,
And all thy love to me!
Yes! while a pulse or breath remains,
Will I remember thee.

And when these failing lips grow dumb,
And thought and memory flee,
When thou shalt in thy kingdom come,
Jesus! remember me.

Montgomery.

15. L. M.

1 Corinthians x. 16.

Communion of my Saviour's blood,
In him to have my lot and part;
To prove the virtue of that flood,
Which burst on Calvary from his heart.

To feed by faith on Christ, my bread,
His body broken on the tree;
To live in Him my living Head,
Who died and rose again for me:

Be this my joy and comfort here;
This pledge of future glory mine!
Jesus! in spirit now appear,
And break the bread, and pour the wine.

From thy dear hand may I receive
The tokens of thy dying love:
And while I feast on earth, believe
That I shall feast with thee above.

Ah! then, though in the lowest place,
Thee at thy table could I meet,
And see thee, know thee, face to face,
For such a moment death were sweet!

What, then, will their fruition be
Who meet in heaven with one accord?
A moment?—No: eternity!
They are for ever with the Lord.

Montgomery.

16. 7's.

Bread of heaven! on thee we feed,
For thy flesh is meat indeed;
Ever let our souls be fed
With this true and living bread!

Vine of heaven! thy blood supplies
This blest cup of sacrifice.
Lord! thy wounds our healing give;
To thy cross we look and live.

Day by day with strength supplied,
Through the life of him who died.
Lord of life! oh let us be
Rooted, grafted, built on thee!

17. L. M.

Now let our faith grow strong, and rise
And view our Lord in all his love;
Look back to hear his dying cries,
Then mount and see his throne above.

See where he languish'd on the cross!
Beneath our sins he groan'd and died;
See where he sits to plead our cause,
By his Almighty Father's side!

How shall we, pardon'd rebels, show
How much we love our dying God?
Lord! here we'd banish every foe:
We hate the sins which cost thy blood.

18. L. M.

When I survey the wondrous cross,
On which the Prince of Glory died,
My richest gain I count but loss,
And pour contempt on all my pride.

Forbid it, Lord, that I should boast,
Save in the cross of Christ my God;
All the vain things that charm me most,
I sacrifice them to his blood.

See from his head, his hands, his feet,
Sorrow and love flow mingled down:
Did e'er such love and sorrow meet,
Or thorns compose so rich a crown?

Were the whole realm of nature mine,
That were a present far too small;
Love so amazing, so divine,
Demands my soul, my life, my all.

Watts.

19. 8-7.

SWEET the moments, rich in blessing,
Which before the cross I spend;
Life, and health, and peace possessing,
From the sinner's dying Friend.

Jesus sought me when a stranger,
Wand'ring from the fold of God;
He, to rescue me from danger,
Interpos'd his precious blood.

Here I'll sit, for ever viewing
Mercy's streams in streams of blood:
Precious drops my soul bedewing,
Plead and claim my peace with God.

O to grace how great a debtor,
Daily I'm constrained to be;
Let thy grace, then, Lord, for ever
Bind my roving heart to thee.

Batty.

20. L. M.

How blest are they, who still abide,
Close sheltered by thy bleeding side;
Who life and strength from thee derive,
And by thee move, and in thee live.

How can it be, thou heavenly King,
That thou should'st us to glory bring,
Make slaves the partners of thy throne,
Deck'd with a never-fading crown?

Hence our hearts melt, our eyes o'erflow;
Our words are lost, nor will we know,
Nor will we think of aught beside,
But Jesus, and him crucified.

21. 7's.

Let me dwell on Golgotha,
Weep, and love, and trust in thee;
Whilst I see thee on the tree,
Weep, and bleed, and die for me!

That dear blood for sinners spilt,
Shews my sin in all its guilt;
Ah! my soul, he bore thy load;
Thou hast slain the Lamb of God.

Hark! his dying word, "Forgive!
Father, let the sinner live;
Sinner, wipe thy tears away,
I thy ransom freely pay."

While I hear this grace revealed,
And obtain a pardon sealed,
All my soft affections move,
Wakened by the force of love.

Farewell, world! thy gold is dross,
Now I see the bleeding cross;
Jesus died to set me free,
From the law, and sin, and thee.

He has dearly bought my soul,
Lord, accept, and claim the whole!
To thy will I all resign,
Now no more my own, but thine.

Newton.

22. P. M.

Lamb of God, whose bleeding love
We now recal to mind;
Send the answer from above,
And let us mercy find;
Think on us, who think on thee,
And every burdened soul release;
O remember Calvary,
And bid us go in peace.

By thine agonizing pain
And bloody sweat we pray;
By thy dying love to man,
Take all our sins away.
Burst our bonds, and set us free,
From all iniquity release;
O remember Calvary,
And bid us go in peace.

Through thy blood, by faith applied,
Let sinners pardon feel;
Speak us freely justified,
And all our sickness heal.
By thy passion on the tree,
Let all our griefs and troubles cease;
O remember Calvary,
And bid us go in peace.

Wesley.

23. C. M.

From Jesu's side a fountain flows,
Of water and of blood,
More healing than Bethesda's pool,
Or famed Siloam's flood.

The dying thief rejoiced to see
That fountain in his day;
And there have I, though vile as he,
Washed all my sins away.

Dear dying Lamb, thy precious blood
Shall never lose its power,
Till all the ransomed church of God
Be saved, to sin no more.

E'er since by faith I saw the stream
Thy flowing wounds supply,
Redeeming love has been my theme,
And shall be till I die.

Then, in a nobler sweeter song,
I'll sing thy power to save,
When this poor lisping, stammering tongue
Lies silent in the grave.

Lord, I believe thou hast prepared
(Unworthy though I be)
For me, a blood-bought free reward—
A golden harp for me!

'Tis strung, and tuned for endless years,
And formed by power divine,
To sound in God the Father's ears
No other name but thine.

Cowper.

24. 8-7.

LAMB of God! I fall before thee,
Humbly trusting in thy cross;
That alone be all my glory,
All things else I count but loss.

Jesus! all my consolations
Flow from thee, thou sovereign good!
Hope, and love, and faith, and patience,
All were purchased by thy blood.

Hart.

25. C. M.

WITH joy we meditate the grace
Of our High Priest above,
His heart o'erflows with tenderness,
His bowels melt with love.

Touched with a sympathy within,
He knows our feeble frame;
He knows what sore temptations mean,
For he has felt the same.

He will not quench the smoking flax,
But raise it to a flame;
The bruised reed he never breaks,
Nor scorns the meanest name.

Then let our humble faith address
His mercy and his power;
We shall obtain delivering grace
In each distressful hour.

Watts.

26. 7's.

Now begin the heavenly theme
Sing aloud in Jesu's name!
Ye who his salvation prove,
Triumph in redeeming love.

Ye, who see the Father's grace
Beaming in the Saviour's face,
As to Canaan on ye move,
Praise and bless redeeming love.

Mourning souls, dry up your tears,
Banish all your guilty fears;
See your guilt and curse remove,
Cancelled by redeeming love.

Welcome all by sin oppress,
Welcome to his sacred rest;
Nothing brought him from above—
Nothing—but redeeming love.

When his Spirit leads us home,
When we to his glory come,
We shall all the fulness prove,
Of our Lord's redeeming love.

27. 7's.

GREAT the joy, when Christians meet;
Christian fellowship, how sweet,
When (their theme of praise the same)
They exalt Jehovah's name!

Sing we, then, eternal love,
Such as did the Father move;
He beheld the world undone,
Loved the world, and gave his Son.

Sing the Son's unbounded love,
How he left the realms above;
Took our nature and our place,
Lived and died to save our race.

Sing we, too, the Spirit's love;
With our stubborn hearts he strove;
Chased the mists of sin away;
Turned our night to glorious day.

Great the joy, the union sweet,
When the saints in glory meet;
Where the theme is still the same,
Where they praise Jehovah's name.

28. P. M.

ARISE, my soul, arise!
Shake off thy guilty fears;
The bleeding Sacrifice
In my behalf appears;
Before the throne my Surety stands;
My name is written on his hands.

He ever lives above,
For me to intercede;
His all-redeeming love,
His precious blood to plead!
His blood atoned for all our race,
He sprinkles now the throne of grace.

The bleeding wounds he bears,
Received on Calvary,
They pour effectual prayers,
They strongly speak for me;
'Forgive him, O forgive,' they cry,
'Nor let that ransomed sinner die.'

My God is reconciled;
His pardoning voice I hear;
He owns me for his child;
I can no longer fear;
With confidence I now draw nigh,
And Father! Abba, Father! cry.

Wesley.

29. 8-7.

STRICKEN, smitten, and afflicted,
See him dying on the tree!
'Tis the Christ! by man rejected!
Yes, my soul, 'tis He! 'tis He!
Mark the sacrifice appointed!
See who bears the awful load!
'Tis the Word, the Lord's anointed,
Son of man and Son of God!

Here we have a firm foundation;
Here's the refuge of the lost;
Christ's the rock of our salvation;
His the name of which we boast.
Lamb of God, for sinners wounded,
Sacrifice to cancel guilt,
None shall ever be confounded
Who on thee their hopes have built.

30. L. M.

GROUND of my hope, the cross appears:
I see the "man of sorrows" bleed:
I bid adieu to guilty fears,
And in his death my pardon read.

Now farewell, world, and farewell, all
That emulates a Saviour's claims;
I'll hear him and obey his call,
Regardless who applauds or blames.

For could'st thou, O my Saviour, die,
To rescue me from endless woe?
Enough! there's none more blest than I,
Since thou could'st love a sinner so.

Kelly.

31. C. M.

THE blest memorials of thy grief,
Thy sufferings and thy death,
We come, dear Saviour, to receive;
But would receive with faith.

The tokens sent us to relieve
 Our spirits when they droop,
We come, dear Saviour, to receive;
 But would receive with hope.

The pledges thou wast pleas'd to leave,
 Our mournful minds to move,
We come, dear Saviour, to receive,
 But would receive with love.

Here, in obedience to thy word,
 We take the bread and wine;
The utmost we can do, dear Lord,
 For all beyond is thine.

Increase our faith, and hope, and love.
 Lord, give us all that's good:
We would thy full salvation prove,
 And share thy flesh and blood.

Hart.

32. L. M.

Pity a helpless sinner, Lord,
Who would believe thy gracious word,
But own my heart, with shame and grief,
The hold of sin and unbelief.

Lord, in thy house I hear there's room;
And, vent'ring hard, behold I come;
But can there, tell me, can there be,
Amongst thy children, room for me.

I eat the bread, and drink the wine;
But, oh! my soul wants more than sign;
I faint unless I feed on thee,
And drink thy blood as shed for me.

For sinners, Lord, thou cam'st to bleed;
And I'm a sinner vile indeed:
Lord, I believe thy grace is free:
Oh magnify that grace in me!

Hart.

III.—AFTER COMMUNICATING.

33. L. M.

Our's is a rich and royal feast,
Provided by the King of heav'n:
How privileg'd are they, and blest,
To whom the Bread of Life is giv'n!

In sacred fellowship we meet,
To celebrate our Saviour's death:
His blood we drink, his flesh we eat;
His people feed on him by faith.

We worship him, who bore the cross;
We glory in his death alone;
The world itself appears but loss,
To those to whom his name is known.

The blood he sheds supplies a stream
That washes all our guilt away;
How precious, then, the Lord should seem,
Whose death we celebrate to-day.

On earth his dying love shall be
Our spring of hope, our theme of joy;
And when in heav'n our Lord we see,
His praise shall all our pow'rs employ.

Kelly.

34. C. M.

Come, let us join our cheerful songs,
With angels round the throne,
Ten thousand thousand are their tongues,
But all their joys are one.

"Worthy the Lamb that died," they cry,
"To be exalted thus;"
"Worthy the Lamb," our lips reply,
"For he was slain for us."

"Jesus is worthy to receive
 "Honour and power divine;
"And blessings more than we can give,
 "Be, Lord, for ever thine."

Let all that dwell above the sky,
 And air, and earth, and seas,
Conspire to lift his glories high,
 And speak his endless praise.

The whole creation join in one,
 To bless the sacred name
Of him that sits upon the throne,
 And to adore the Lamb.

Watts.

35. L. M.

HEAV'N is our promis'd, purchas'd home,
Where saints shall meet beyond the tomb:
And, O, be this our constant care,
That we may meet together there!

There sin shall vex our souls no more,
No grief is there, nor want, nor sore!
But all in that bless'd place above,
Is joy, and health, and peace, and love.

36. 7's.

ISRAEL'S Shepherd! guide me, feed me,
 Through my pilgrimage below;
And beside the waters lead me,
 Where thy flocks rejoicing go.

Jesus! heavenly Shepherd! ever
 Guard and keep me in thy way;
I have found thee, and would never,
 Never from thy presence stray.

O how sweet and comfortable,
 In the wilderness to see
Such provision, and a table
 Spread for sinners; yes, for me!

There thy bounty still partaking,
Consecrated bread and wine,
Freely all things else forsaking,
I behold the Saviour mine.

In that bruised body broken,—
In the shedding of that blood,—
What a gracious pledge and token,
Lord! we have, for ev'ry good!

O my soul, no longer harden'd,
Now thy Saviour's help implore,
While he bids thee, freely pardon'd,
"Go in peace, but sin no more."

J. Bickersteth.

37. C. M.

O LORD, my best desire fulfil,
And help me to resign
Life, health, and comfort to thy will,
And make thy pleasure mine.

Why should I shrink at thy command,
Whose love forbids my fears?
Or tremble at the gracious hand
That wipes away my tears?

No: rather let me freely yield
What most I prize to thee;
Who never hast a good withheld,
Or wilt withhold, from me.

Thy favour all my journey through,
Thou art engaged to grant;
What else I want, or think I do,
'Tis better still to want.

Cowper.

38. C. M.

MY God! the covenant of thy love
Abides for ever sure;
And in its matchless grace I feel
My happiness secure.

What tho' my house be not with thee
As nature could desire?
To nobler joys than nature gives
Thy servants may aspire.

Since thou, the everlasting God,
My Father art become;
Jesus my Guardian and my Friend,
And heaven my final home.

I welcome all thy sov'reign will,
For all that will is love;
And when I know not what thou dost,
I wait the light above.

Doddridge.

39. L. M.

EMPTIED of earth I fain would be
Of sin, of self, of all but thee;
Reserv'd for Christ that bled and died—
Surrender'd to the Crucified!

Sequester'd from the noise and strife,
The lust, the pomp, and pride of life;
Prepar'd for heaven, my noblest care,
And have my conversation there.

Nothing, save Jesus, would I know!
My Friend and my Companion thou;
Constrain my soul thy ways to own;
Self-will, self-righteousness, dethrone.

Detach from sublunary joys
One that would only hear thy voice,
Thy beauty see, thy grace admire,
Nor glow but with celestial fire.

Larger communion let me prove
With the blest object of my love:
But, oh! for this no power have I;
My strength is at *thy* feet to lie.

Toplady.

IV.—FESTIVALS.

HYMN FOR ADVENT. C. M.

He comes! the Saviour full of grace,
By ancient prophets sung;
The smile of mercy in his face,
And truth upon his tongue.

In him the world no beauty sees,
No form, no comeliness;
Rejected and despis'd he is,
And plung'd in deep distress.

But there's a people taught by grace,
To know his matchless worth;
They own him, though accounted base,
And shew his praises forth.

Of Him, who came to save the lost,
His Father's only Son,
His people make their daily boast,
Of Him, and Him alone.

HYMN FOR CHRISTMAS. C. M.

Hark! the glad sound, the Saviour comes,
The Saviour promised long:
Let ev'ry heart prepare a throne,
And ev'ry voice a song.

He comes, the broken heart to bind,
The bleeding soul to cure;
And, with the treasures of his grace,
T' enrich the humble poor.

Our glad hosannas, Prince of Peace,
Thy welcome shall proclaim;
And heaven's eternal arches ring
With thy beloved name.

Doddridge.

HYMN FOR EASTER. C. M.

YE humble souls that seek the Lord,
Chase all your fears away;
And bow with pleasure down to see,
The place where Jesus lay.

Thus low the Lord of life was brought,
Such wonders love could do;
Thus cold in death that Saviour laid,
Who bled and died for you.

But dry your tears, and tune your songs,
The Saviour lives again!
Not all the bolts and bars of death
The conqueror could detain.

With joy like his shall ev'ry saint
His empty tomb survey,
Then rise with his ascending Lord
To realms of endless day.

Doddridge.

ANOTHER. 7's.

JESUS CHRIST is ris'n to-day,
(Our triumphant holiday)
Who so lately on the cross
Suffer'd to redeem our loss.

Hymns of praises let us sing
Unto Christ, our heav'nly King,
Who endur'd the cross and grave,
Sinners to redeem and save.

By the pains which he endur'd,
Our salvation he procur'd:
Now in heaven he is King,
Where the angels ever sing.—Hallelujah.

HYMN FOR ASCENSION. 7's.

SEE, the heav'n its Lord receives!
Yet he loves the earth he leaves;
Though returning to his throne,
Still he calls mankind his own.

Still for us he intercedes,
Prevalent his death he pleads;
Next himself prepares our place,
First-born of the human race.

Master, Lord, to thee we cry,
On thy throne exalted high;
See thy faithful servants, see,
Ever looking up to thee!

Grant, though parted from our sight,
Far above yon azure height,
Grant our hearts may thither rise,
Seeking thee beyond the skies.

HYMN FOR WHIT-SUNDAY. L. M.

SPIRIT of Mercy, Truth, and Love!
O shed thy influence from above,
Descend and dwell in every heart,
And light and life divine impart.

In every clime, by every tongue,
Be God's amazing glory sung;
Let all the listening earth be taught
The acts our great Redeemer wrought.

Unfailing Comfort, heavenly Guide!
Still o'er thy favour'd church preside:
Still may mankind thy blessings prove,
Spirit of Mercy, Truth, and Love!

HYMN FOR TRINITY-SUNDAY. P. M.

We give immortal praise
To God the Father's love,
For all our comforts here,
And better hopes above;
He sent his own eternal Son,
To die for sins which men had done.

To God the Son belongs
Immortal glory too,
Who bought us with his blood
From everlasting woe:
And now he lives, and now he reigns,
And sees the fruit of all his pains.

To God the Holy Ghost,
Immortal praise we give,
Whose new-creating pow'r
Makes the dead soul revive:
His work completes the great design,
And fills our hearts with joys divine.

Almighty God, we bow
Before thy glorious throne;
The undivided Three,
And the mysterious One!
Thee we adore, eternal Lord,
And rest our faith upon thy word.

ANOTHER. L. M.

Bless'd be the Father, and his love,
To whose celestial source we owe
Oceans of endless joy above,
And streams of comfort here below.

Glory to thee, great Son of God,
From whose dear wounded body rolls
A precious stream of vital blood,
Pardon and life for dying souls.

We give thee, sacred Spirit, praise,
Who in our hearts of sin and woe,
Makest living springs of grace arise,
And into boundless glory flow.

Thus God the Father, God the Son,
And God the Spirit we adore;
That sea of life and love unknown,
Without a bottom or a shore.

Watts.



CHAPTER XI.

THE DUE IMPROVEMENT OF THE LORD'S SUPPER.

THE design of this chapter is to furnish such hints as may assist the communicant to obtain practical advantage from his observance of this institution, in his subsequent course. The state of mind which is fostered at the Lord's table, the feelings there excited, and the blessings there enjoyed, should be brought into practical application, and maintained by watchfulness and prayer. *Look to yourselves, that we lose not those things that we have wrought.* 2 John 8.

Some seem to think, that if they have received the outward elements in a serious manner, abstained from their worldly business before and after, restrained their tongues from rough and unkind remarks, and behaved with sobriety for the day, that then they have done an acceptable service to God. But, Christian reader, let our aim be higher and better than this. Seek duly to profit by the ordinance, so that it may be a fresh spring to a holy life.

In attending to the due observance of the Lord's Supper, it may be expedient, first to review what is past, and then to notice the duties to which the faith-

ful communicant is specially called. Such a work necessarily calls for retirement and reflection. Self-recollection, and communion with God in secret, should therefore succeed, as soon as we have opportunity, to our more public employments.*

Suppose, then, the Christian to have retired to his closet, one of his first duties will be, TO REVIEW THE STATE OF HIS MIND during the past solemnity.

In order to ascertain whether it has been such as we may have reason to hope will, on the whole, through the merits of the Redeemer be *acceptable to God;* (Rom. xiv. 18.) let us make a few practical inquiries, with reference to the exercise of those graces which we have before shown to be necessary to receiving the Lord's Supper with benefit; such as repentance, faith, gratitude, and charity; (see chap. i. part ii.) and with reference to those directions which have been before given for the employment of the mind during the communion service. See chap. iv. part ii.

The chief thing is, have you duly remembered Christ at his table? You may know this by the holy tempers and dispositions which such a remembrance is calculated to produce and increase.

A due remembrance of Christ will increase PENITENCE and sorrow for sin. The contemplation in a right spirit of the only-begotten of his Father, *wounded*

* It is recorded of the pious Bonnell, "When he returned from church, he immediately retired to the closet, and spent a considerable time in his own private prayers and praises. And as his wife was still his fellow-communicant, so with her he prayed before dinner; blessing God for that happy opportunity given them both of commemorating our Saviour's sufferings, and receiving the pledges of his reconciled favours, and praying for all those who had been partakers with them that day, or at any other time, of those blessed means of grace which they had then received." See Hamilton's Life of Bonnell.

for our transgressions, is evidently calculated to produce fresh convictions of the evil and guilt of all sin; and contrition and compunction for our many, our wilful, and our repeated transgressions. When with the eye of faith we look on him *whom* we have *pierced*, then it is we *mourn* for sin, and our hearts rise in holy indignation against ourselves. Have we, then, felt at the Lord's table any thing like a deeper and more lively sense of our shameful ingratitude, our cold affections, and our base rebellions? Has this produced in us any feeling of godly sorrow, and truly humbled us before our heavenly Father?

If Christ be duly remembered, FAITH will be increased. We shall with more confidence look to Christ, as our only Saviour, and feel that we may safely leave our everlasting interests with him. We shall repose with a more stedfast and unshaken reliance on his unchangeable love, and his complete salvation. Faith will be growing to the full assurance of hope, that since we believe on the name of Jesus, (John i. 12.) we are children of God, and may look up to him as our heavenly Father, and thus our hearts will be filled with joy and with peace.

If Christ be duly remembered, *assurance* of an interest in him will increase. There is a striking passage in the Homily on the sacrament, showing how assurance is connected with the reception of the Lord's Supper. After giving the high expressions of the Fathers upon this ordinance, and guarding against resting in the outward elements, the Homily proceeds "always holding fast and cleaving by faith to the ROCK whence we may suck the sweetness of everlasting salvation. Thus much more the faithful see, hear, and know, the favourable mercies of God

sealed, the satisfaction by Christ towards us confirmed, and the remission of sin established. Here they may feel wrought the tranquillity of conscience, the increase of faith, the strengthening of hope, the large spreading abroad of brotherly kindness, with many other graces of God; the taste whereof they cannot attain unto, who are drowned in the deep dirty lake of blindness and ignorance: from which, beloved, wash yourselves with the living waters of God's word, whence you may know both the spiritual food of this costly supper, and the happy trustings and effects that the same brings with it. Now it follows, to have with this knowledge, a sure and constant faith not only that the death of Christ is available for the redemption of all the world, for the remission of sins, and reconciliation with God the Father; but also that he has made upon his cross a full and sufficient sacrifice for thee, a perfect cleansing of thy sins, so that thou acknowledgest no other Saviour, Redeemer, Mediator, Advocate, Intercessor, but Christ only; and that thou mayest say with the apostle, that he loved thee, and gave himself for thee. For this is to stick fast to Christ's promise made in this institution, to make Christ thine own, and to apply his merits unto thyself."

If Christ be duly remembered, GRATITUDE will be a prevailing sentiment in our hearts. You cannot consider aright your obligations to him without some emotions of love in your bosom. You will be ready to say, Surely I ought to love Christ. He made me, and died for me; he whom I have slighted and neglected, and who yet intercedes daily in my behalf, justly demands my warmest affections, and my whole heart. What friend have I so powerful, so wise, so

tender, so forbearing, as Christ! See if there were ever sorrow like his sorrow; and that he underwent for me! Unsolicited, undesired, unwelcomed, he came and stood in the gap between me and eternal ruin. He disclosed the way to endless glory, and he now guides me by his Holy Spirit along the path of life; and can I remember this love aright without some kindlings of gratitude in my heart?

To this we may well join ADMIRATION, as another effect of a due remembrance of Christ. Who is so worthy of our admiration as he who is the source of all the excellence that is in others, and who combines in himself whatever is great, and whatever is good; whatever is worthy of love and of praise? At the Lord's table you behold the most exalted of all beings giving his life a ransom for you, and tendering to you the blessings which you need. Though he be *the brightness of his Father's glory*, and *the express image of his person*; yet *he receiveth sinners, and eateth with them.* Can we then contemplate this astonishing mystery of redeeming love, without some sentiments of admiration? When the spirit is calm, and the heart is pure, can we but admire the grace of Christ, and sing the song,—*Worthy is the Lamb that was slain, to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing?* The angels above *desire to look into these things*, and they sing his praise; can we then, when we remember what he has done, but be warmed with his love, and re-echo the angelic song,—*Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto Him that sitteth upon the throne, and to the Lamb for ever.*

If CHRIST be duly remembered, LOVE TO MAN will also be enlarged. It is impossible, really, to feel

Christ's love to us, without some feelings of compassion and tenderness, forbearance, forgiveness, and kindness towards others. We shall come sometimes with a glowing heart, kindling with emotions of warmest love towards all around us, and our natural selfishness will for a season be exchanged for the generous, the expansive, the elevating feeling of genuine Christian charity. We shall feel the force of the motive, *Put on, therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind; long-suffering, forbearing one another, and forgiving one another; if any man have a quarrel against any, even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye.*

But perhaps you find, on inquiry, that instead of having holy and devout feelings, your FEELINGS have been COLD AND DULL, and your mind has been wandering and distressed. Your examinations should tend to ascertain whether there be not a cause for this in yourself. It is true that Christians often find themselves more harassed by their corruptions at the seasons of devotion, than at other times. The exercises of prayer and communion with God, directly oppose the stream of sin, and its torrent being stemmed, swells more against us. Satan too, perhaps, peculiarly tempts us at such a season, filling the mind with vain and trifling thoughts; and God permits it to be so, that we may be kept humble. We are ready enough to rest in our services, poor as they are: what would it be if they were wholly right? But while we make these allowances, it is still true, as it has been observed, that "unless in the case of bodily disease, or erroneous views of divine truth, the want of comfort in religion springs from open or secret sin, from backsliding in heart,

or in life. The joy of God's salvation is a holy joy, not to be found in the ways of sin, nor to be experienced in an evil heart of unbelief, departing from the living God."

Inquire then if any sin yet reign unmortified in your heart. Inquire how you approached to that holy table. On this point we refer you to what has been already said, chap. x. part i. pp. 124—129. If you went thither carelessly, not preparing at all, or very slightly, or as a matter of self-righteousnesss, to make you worthy, as you vainly fancied, to appear before God; in any of these cases, no wonder that you met with a rebuke, rather than a blessing; and, instead of light found darkness. If you have received ignorantly or irreverently, uncharitably or with a carnal mind, the advice of Peter applies to you,—*Repent, therefore, of this thy wickedness, and pray God, if perhaps the thought of thine heart may be forgiven thee.* Acts viii. 21—23. If you have gone thus carelessly and presumptuously, you have profaned a solemn ordinance, and you have sinned greatly before God. But still be not cast down in despair, as if this were an unpardonable sin. Now, in your retirement, humble yourself before God, and you may here perhaps first be taught your natural corruption and helplessness; you may here first learn the lessons of brokenness of heart, and sorrow before God. Though we should deeply mourn and carefully watch and strive against every sinful act, yet the wonderful grace of God overrules sometimes even the very failings of his servants to their ultimate spiritual benefit.

Having thus pointed out the review which it is desirable to take of the state of our minds, and given

such hints as may assist those who have not received with comfort or apparent profit, or have not duly received, we proceed to point out THE DUTIES TO WHICH THE FAITHFUL COMMUNICANT IS CALLED.

We have reason to hope that most of those who have duly prepared, will find on their return from this sacrament, that even when they have had no remarkable elevation, they have still been enabled to go through the duty with seriousness and attention; something of a holy impression is left on their minds, some check is given to the love of sin, and some additional strength for holy duties.

And some can in more favoured periods say "enjoyed much of the presence of God, had communion with my Saviour and his people, and it was a *time of refreshing from the presence of the Lord.*"

In either of these cases those words are applicable to us—*What shall I render unto the Lord for all his benefits towards me? I will take the cup of salvation,* and call upon the name of the Lord; I will pay my vows unto the Lord now in the presence of all his people.* Psalm cxvi. Great have been his benefits to you. *Jesus Christ hath been evidently set forth crucified among you.* You have seen that his blood was shed for the remission of sins, and you have been led

* In this term there is an allusion to a custom among the Jews of taking the cup, called the cup of deliverance, salvation, or blessing, at their solemn feasts, or when offering sacrifices for particular mercies; so that this is as if David had said, "I will call all my friends together to rejoice with me," and taking the cup, which we call the cup of salvation, (because when blessed and set apart we are wont thus to commemorate the blessings which we have received) "I will magnify the power, goodness, and faithfulness of God my Saviour, before all the company, and then give it to them, that they may together with me praise his name." See Note, page 106.

to contemplate the risen Saviour in heaven as still carrying on the work of mercy; there pleading for you, thence bestowing his Holy Spirit, there preparing a home for you, and there waiting to receive you. Jesus Christ has afresh tendered himself and all his salvation to you through his ministers, and you have received the emblems appointed, not only to exhibit his atonement, but to be given to each of his people personally, to assure them of their individual interest in his salvation. Their inquiry, under the sense of these benefits, should be—*What shall I render unto the Lord?* Christian reader! see what beloved sin you can now for ever put away. Ask yourself,—"How can I now set forth the glory of God, and most advance his kingdom? In what possible way can I best manifest my sense of his benefits?" What are the duties to which I am now specially called? We will state them in a few practical directions.

1. ABOUND MORE IN ACTS OF DEVOTION. Let us PRAISE our God more. There will ever be a remarkable contrast between God's blessings and our returns. He bestows innumerable blessings. We have nothing to give to him. After having done all, *we are unprofitable servants.* But he accepts a thankful spirit as a suitable return for his blessings. *Whoso offereth me praise, he glorifieth me.* Let us then cultivate a lively sense of God's mercies, and a continual recollection and grateful acknowledgment of them. So shall we most resemble the blessed angels above, whose happiness it is, through all eternity, to praise and glorify God. And "as the beams of the divine goodness everlastingly shine upon them, so there is an everlasting reflection of the same goodness in the

incessant return of praise and thanksgiving from them." Again, let us be more fervent and constant in PRAYER. If we have had, in the Lord's Supper, intimate communion with God, let us not lose the benefit by neglecting again to seek him. Not one of the duties which now lie before you, can you fulfil in your own strength. Not one of your enemies can you resist by your own power. You are wholly dependant on the Lord. Go then more constantly and simply to him. If we have obtained many blessings in answer to our supplications, let it encourage us to more frequent prayer. Though we may tell an earthly friend that if he will give us our requests, we will trouble him no more; it need not be so with God. Nay, quite the reverse. David says, *Because he hath inclined his ear unto me, therefore will I call upon him as long as I live.* That repetition of request which would be offensive to man, is most grateful to Him in whom all fulness dwells, and who delights to give to them that ask. Let God's benefits then, in the Lord's Supper, lead you to expect more from him, and to spend more time than ever you have before done in prayer to him. Let us also be more diligent in searching the SCRIPTURES. Here *is the lamp to our feet,* and the *light* that will direct *our paths.* Here the blessings and the duties of that New Covenant, the ratification of which you have been commemorating, are fully displayed for your comfort and your guidance. Have to say then with David, *I made haste, and delayed not, to keep thy commandments.* Psalm cxix. 60.

2. REMEMBER YOUR GREATER OBLIGATIONS TO OBEDIENCE. Though we are bound to fulfil the will of God as his creatures, it is well to have added, as

we have done at the Lord's table, the new, distinct, and additional engagements of holy resolutions and vows, the self-binding authority of devout dedication of ourselves to God. It is calculated to impress more deeply on our minds the solemn duty of obedience to God's holy law. There is also a greater sin in disobedience, after such a voluntary surrender of ourselves to God. *When thou shalt vow a vow unto the Lord thy God, thou shalt not be slack to pay it, for the Lord thy God will surely require it of thee, and it would be sin in thee.* Deut. xxiii. 21. If a man keep not his solemn promise and engagement, we call him dishonest and fraudulent. If those that are married break their vows of fidelity, we consider them as adulterers and adulteresses; what then are we to think of those who break vows of an infinitely stronger and more awful nature—who are unfaithful to God himself? Let us endeavour to know and to feel with David, *Thy vows are upon me, O Lord.* Psalm lvi. 12. The scriptural rule is, *when thou vowest a vow, defer not to pay it.* After receiving, our first aim should be, to bring our good resolutions into practice, forsaking our past sins, and performing our omitted duties. As you are no longer your own, let this be your feeling—"I am now fixed, immoveably fixed for Christ and holiness, against sin and Satan. The matter is settled, never to be called in question again—I will serve the Lord." Whatever others may do, have a settled conviction that you can no longer halt between two opinions. You must be *stedfast, unmoveable, and always abounding in the work of the Lord.* When a temptation presents itself, let us then put it off, saying, as Earle remarks, "Is such an action becoming what thou didst lately at

the Lord's table promise? Is such a conduct worthy of a Christian, and becoming for a communicant? Does the indulgence of such a fleshly lust become a disciple of the holy Jesus, the immaculate Lamb of God? Is pride, passion, malice, envy, and uncharitableness, suitable to the solemn profession of returning to him, who came to destroy the works of the devil?" Let us remember also that our obligations are not of a transitory nature, but for our whole lives. There are those who will be very strict for a little time after the sacrament, but soon return to their former sinful liberties. Such conduct seems to show that they have not yet been acting under the feeling of gratitude and love. We should not obey under the restraint of fear, the bondage of an unwilling mind, reluctantly brought to discharge the outward services; but freely and gladly giving God our whole hearts.

3. ENDEAVOUR TO RETAIN THE HOLY FEELINGS THAT HAVE BEEN EXCITED. You are returning to a chilling and distracting world. The devout and heavenly thoughts which filled your mind at the Lord's table, may soon be dissipated and lost. It should be our aim and effort to gain the spirit of holiness as a blessed habit of our minds, so that we may not be holy only on a sacrament-day, but holy at all times, and in all places. This is that *spiritual mind which is life and peace:* and till we gain this, we shall never truly know the blessedness of true religion. You have perhaps had in this solemn service, or in connection with it, lively desires excited in your heart after the Saviour's presence and glory; you have been led to aspire after and long for those superior joys which are *at his right hand for evermore;*

and have been ready to say, *Blessed is he that shall eat bread in the kingdom of God.* O then, after the enjoyment of such feelings and desires, let us no longer *cleave so to the dust,* and make this world our resting-place, and our portion, as we have heretofore done; but rather *set our affections on things above.* You have, perhaps, felt a strength of attachment to Christ which you have never before experienced. Be it your aim to keep this feeling strong in your hearts, that your love may never wax cold.

4. CONTEND MORE VIGOROUSLY WITH YOUR SPIRITUAL ENEMIES. Every time we receive the Lord's Supper, we renew afresh our baptismal vows, and renounce afresh our three great enemies, the devil and all his works, the pomps and vanities of this wicked world, and all the sinful lusts of the flesh. O do not merely profess to serve God; do not serve him with your lips only, while your heart is in league with his enemies. Be not so inconsistent as to act in direct contradiction to those solemn professions which you have been making in the presence of God and his people, by again yielding to the temptations of Satan, and walking after the course of this world, and following the devices of your own evil heart. Surely it is a suitable thought after this service, "I have disclaimed the world as my portion, shall I then, for the compassing a little of its forbidden gain, wrong my brother, to whom I ought to do good? wrong my profession which I ought to adorn? and wrong my conscience, which I ought to keep void of offence?" In the words of St. Paul, *Ye cannot drink of the cup of the Lord, and the cup of devils: ye cannot be partakers of the Lord's table, and of the table of devils. What fellowship hath righteousness with unright-*

eousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? and what concord hath Christ with Belial? Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord. Avoid then all unnecessary associations with worldly and wicked people. Do not make them the companions of your choice. Rather say with David, *Depart from me, ye evil doers; for I will keep the commandments of my God.* Come out of the sinful practices, the vain amusements, and the trifling pursuits of the world. You belong to a better society; you have higher and holier companions.

We have noticed that Christians may be specially harassed by their corruptions, at seasons of devotion; and it has been sometimes found that after receiving, they have been much tempted by their great adversary. They have been tempted, perhaps, to think highly of themselves as spiritual and holy characters. Guard against thus falling into pride, the peculiar temptation of the devil. *Eating and drinking in the presence of Christ*, (Luke xiii. 26.) are by no means decided proofs of eminent piety. At other times we are tempted after the enjoyment of a spiritual privilege, to become careless, unwatchful, and off our guard. It is recorded for our admonition, that Peter denied, and all the disciples forsook their Master after the Lord's Supper. Let us then *watch and pray.* Let us go from the Lord's Supper, not to indulge sloth and negligence, but a holy walk with God, and a determined conflict with all our spiritual enemies, boldly confessing our Saviour before men, and *speaking good of his name.*

5. ENDEAVOUR TO ATTAIN MORE OF THE MIND OF CHRIST. Imitate the Saviour, whose death you have been commemorating. O that there were such a

love to Christ, and delight in him, and admiration of him, that we copied his graces, and were never content till we were like him. Let the same spirit animate you which animated him, the spirit of gentleness, meekness, patience, and love: the spirit of faith, devotion, self-denial, and zeal. The disciples should be like their Master. *He that saith he abideth in him, ought himself so to walk, as he also walked.* The apostles, from their having been with our Lord, attained something of his holy courage and firmness; and their enemies even *took knowledge of them, that they had been with Jesus.* O that there were such an evident elevation of piety in every communicant, such meekness, heavenly-mindedness, and self-denial, that all around could see the blessed effects of communion with Christ at his table.

6. CULTIVATE A SPIRIT OF SINCERE LOVE, love to the brethren, and to all men. This duty is here taught with much advantage. Having seen in this ordinance that Christians are all members of the same body, consider what love there should be among them. Let us frequent, and delight in, the society of the pious. David says, *I am a companion of all them that fear thee, and of them that keep thy precepts.* Surely we ought to have a tender sympathy in each other's sorrows and each other's joys. Let this holy feast teach us disinterested, fervent, pure, self-denying, undissimulating love to the brethren! to be like-minded one towards another according to Christ Jesus; to put away as much as possible all coldness, distance, suspicions, and jealousies; and to be open, kind, and tender-hearted, *forgiving one another, even as God, for Christ's sake, has forgiven you.* It has been well said, "Let those that have had

communion with God in this ordinance be able to appeal to their relations and domestics, and all they converse with, and to vouch them for witnesses that they have mastered their passions, and are grown more mild and quiet in their families than formerly they were. Let us never give occasion to the enemies of religion to say that the seriousness of religion makes men sour and morose, and that zeal in devotion disposes them to peevishness and passion;" *— let us rather show that the more earnest we are in religion, the more cheerful we are, and amiable, and loving towards all with whom we have to deal.

This love will be shown in gladly availing ourselves of opportunities to do good, and seeking for such opportunities. It will also manifest itself in attention to the wants of the poor. If we ourselves have richly partaken of the feast which God's mercy has provided for us, *let us send portions unto them for whom nothing is prepared*, Neh. viii. 10. Let us be thoughtful of the spiritual and temporal wants of the afflicted poor around us.

7. ADORN THE RELIGION OF YOUR SAVIOUR. Let our spirit and temper, our words, and our whole conduct and behaviour, be such as *becometh the gospel of Christ*. How devout, how holy, and how spiritual was the conversation of our Lord, as we have it recorded from the 14th to the 17th chapter of St. John's gospel, after first administering and partaking of this ordinance! O that our conversation, too, like his, may ever after be full of love, and kindness, and devotion! Again, a faithful discharge of relative duties truly adorns religion. "The master ruling

* See Henry's Communicant's Companion.

with gentleness, the servant labouring with cheerfulness and fidelity; the husband kind and tender, the wife meek and obedient; the father mixing parental affection with correction, the son manifesting filial love, with dutiful submission: and so in every other relation, each fulfilling the duties of their station. This will make our houses temples; and the charity, forbearance, patience, and submission shown one to another in such families, will be the most convincing proof that Christ really dwells under that roof." God has brought you near to him, *that you may be unto him for a people, and for a name, and for a praise, and for a glory.* The profession of religion made at the Lord's table, seems to impress this duty of honouring his name with peculiar force. You have been publicly confessing Christ before men, and acknowledging your hope in him before his people. You have also received from him the tokens of his favour. The honour of Christ is then in some measure entrusted to you. The men of the world, perversely enough, and sometimes, alas! to their eternal ruin, judge of Christ and his gospel by the conduct of his professing people. Your failings may be a stumbling-block; your stedfastness in faith, hope, and love, a blessing to many. Christian communicant! your tempers and dispositions should set forth the excellence of Christ to a world ignorant of him. When the more glorious light of the sun has left us, the mild and peaceful beams of the moon enlighten a land otherwise enveloped in darkness; and give us some faint, yet cheering resemblance of the beauty and benefit of the greater light of heaven. Christian communicant! let your light, borrowed from the Saviour, reflect some peaceful and beneficial rays

in the midst of a dark world. *Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.*

We conclude the whole Treatise, by pressing on the reader's attention the importance of observing this ordinance, and repeating the dying charge of the Redeemer:

THIS DO,
IN REMEMBRANCE OF ME.

THE END.

TABLE OF TEXTS,

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